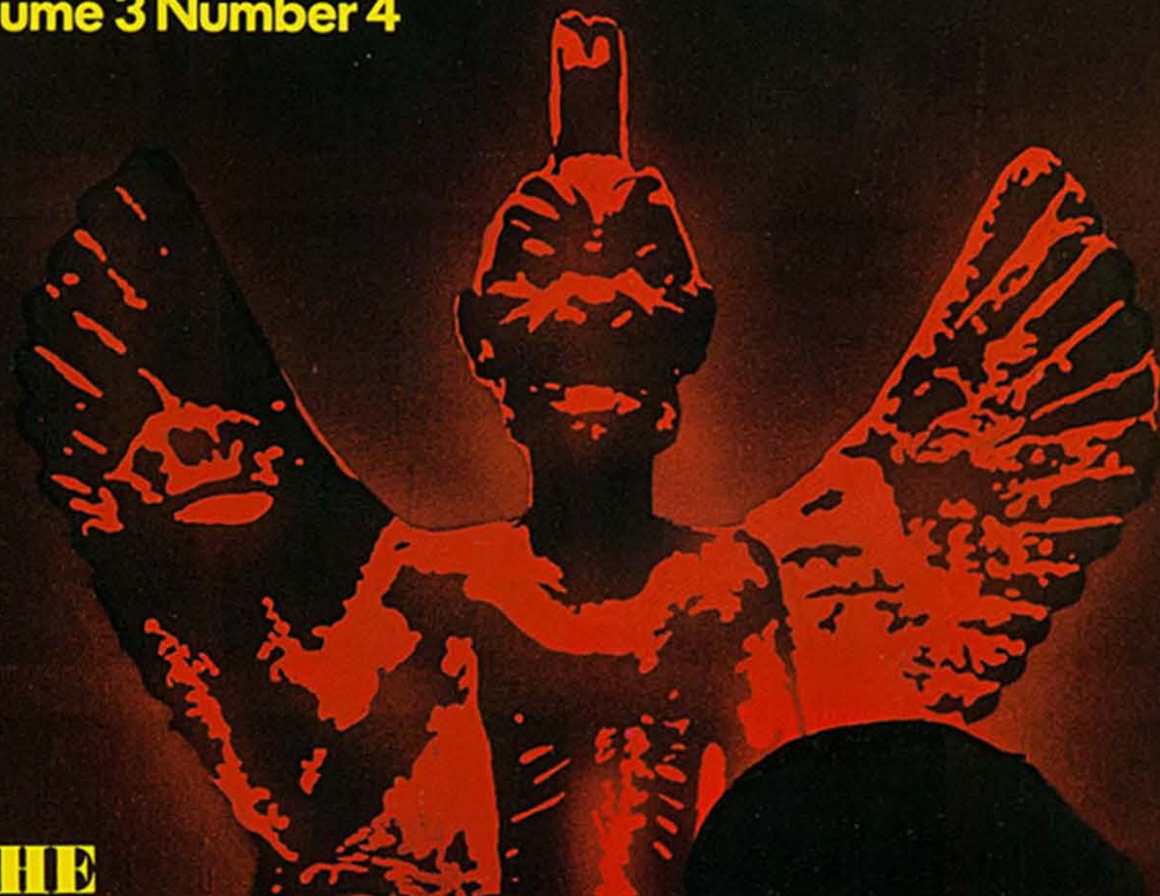


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THE EXORCIST



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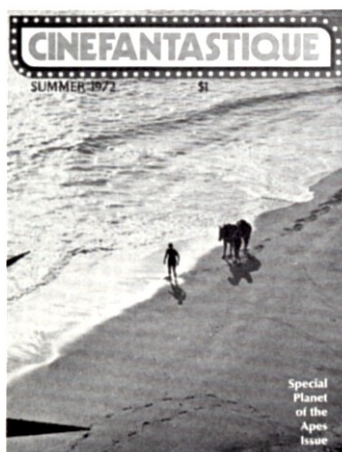
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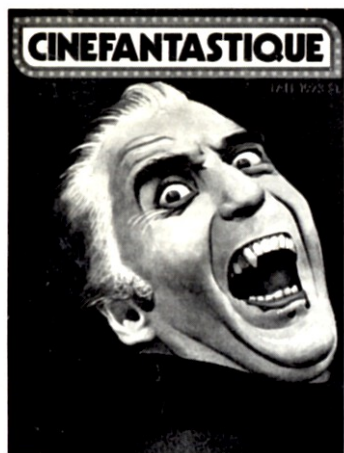
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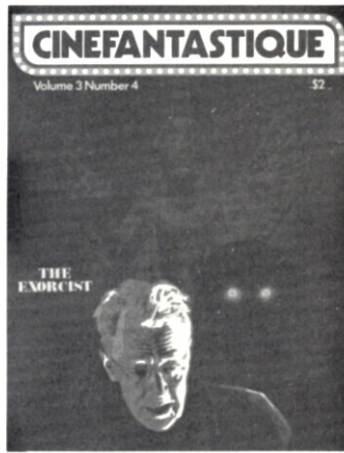
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FLESH GORDON

AN AMERICAN IMAGE OF PURITY AND INNOCENCE LOSES ITS CHERRY

Last time, you remember, our intrepid interviewers were ascending in the elevator to the 11th floor of the National Screen Service building, on their way to interview Howard Ziehm, the co-director of *FLESH GORDON*. As the lift carried the pair upward, Mark and Doug eyed the other passengers suspiciously. Now quite close to their objective, the prospect of something going wrong worried them. The doors opened on the 11th floor, and the duo stepped out into the corridor and headed for the screening room. Howard was nowhere to be found. Mark and Doug decided to wait it out.

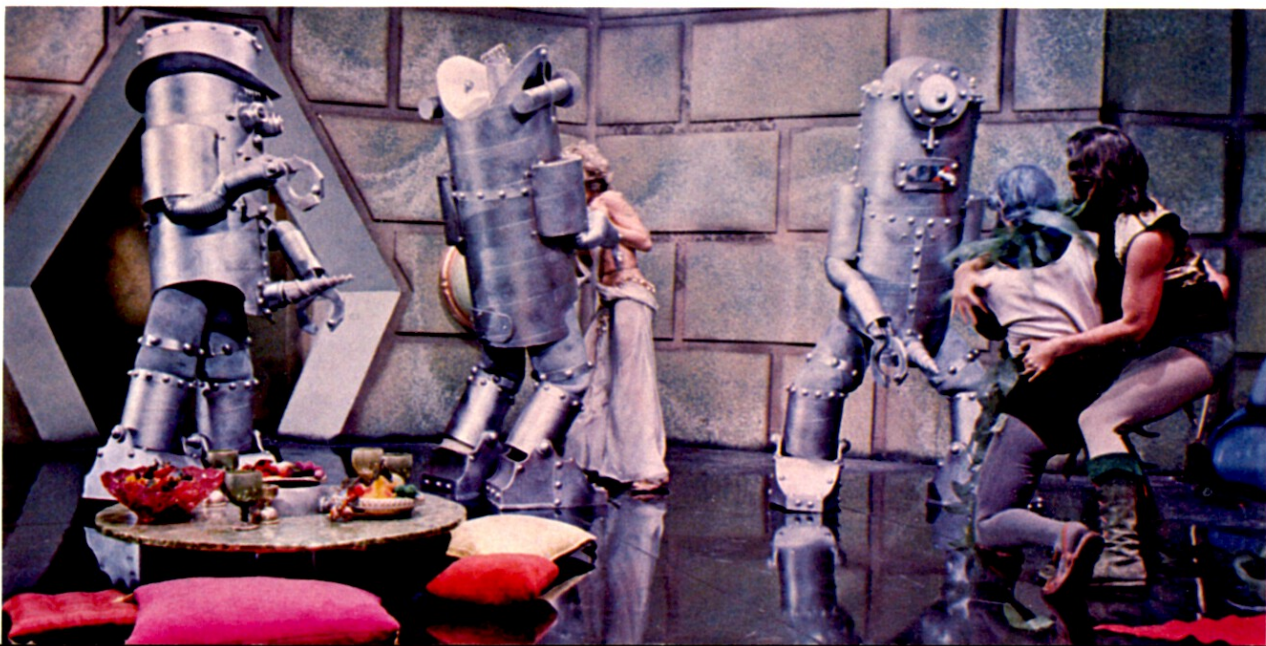
Time passed and soon it was 12:45. The meeting had been scheduled for 12:30. Our heroes grew nervous. "Golly, what if we have the wrong address," shouted Mark. "Gosh, then we're bloody well sunk," answered Doug. Was this the end for our courageous pair? Would our curious heroes never question the father of *FLESH GORDON* for the benefit of all mankind?

Just then, help was sighted on the horizon. Ambling amiably into the screening room came the co-producer Peter Locke, and to his right, our quarry, Howard Ziehm. Before another brush with the possibility of no interview could occur, we hustled Howard off to a secluded area of the building to begin. Howard gladly answered our questions, although at first he seemed a bit shy. This was, he said, his first interview, and he was a little nervous. Whether because of shyness or nerves, Howard Ziehm came across rather like the proverbial boy next door: tall, California sun-tan, sandy-blond hair, all smiles and eager to please. From his demeanor one would never suspect he helped concoct the outrageous goings on in *FLESH GORDON*, or for that matter, *MONA* or *HOLLYWOOD BLUE*. We soon discovered that Howard was anything but the typical boy next door, for he was soft-spoken and articulate as he gave us a step-by-step account of the genesis of *FLESH GORDON*.

CFQ: Previous to *FLESH GORDON*, what film projects have you done?

ZIEHM: I've only been in the film business for about five years. Believe it or not, I started out taking baby pictures, and this was my first photographic experience. My partner and I decided to go into the film business, and we wanted to make a motorcycle flick, but we had only about \$80 between the two of us. We knew nothing about film, but we tried to find out what equipment would cost us. We soon found out that it was way out of our ballpark. The only thing we could do for \$80 was shoot some girlie pictures, and so that's what we did. We started out with stills,

The "raping robots" attack Flesh and his band of adventurers in Emperor Wang's palace. Tom Scherman constructed the robots to resemble those seen in numerous Republic serials of the '40s.



HOWARD ZIEHM, PRODUCER, CO-DIRECTOR AND BANKROLLER OF ONE OF THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS FANTASY FILMS OF ALL TIME, INTERVIEWED BY MARK CARDUCCI AND DOUGLAS OLSON.

Dale Ardor (Suzanne Fields) and Prince Precious parachute to safety in a scene edited from the final release print of *FLESH GORDON*.



Top: The great god Porno is brought to life by Emperor Wang and promptly abducts Dale Ardor. The model was originally constructed by Mike Hyatt who was later removed from work on the film. The sequence was photographed by Jim Aupperle with Robert Maine doing animation. Middle: Suzanne Fields as Dale Ardor in the grip of a full-sized mock-up of the hand of the great god Porno model. Bottom: Dr. Jerkoff's penis-shaped rocketship emerges from the hangar on its launching ramp. The model was designed by Mike Minor and constructed by Greg Jein. Minor did extensive production, effects and set design during the early history of *FLESH GORDON* but is completely overlooked in the film's on-screen credits.



and finally made enough money to go into films. People liked our style, and we were very successful. One of our later efforts was a film called *MONA*, which is now hailed as the first sex film with a story. It was a crude film, but it still had a few rudiments of something to it. Michael Benveniste worked with me on *MONA*, then on *HOLLYWOOD BLUE* and *HARLOT*. One day he came around with the idea of doing a spoof on Flash Gordon, calling it *FLESH GORDON*. That was what kicked off the project.

CFQ: In its early stages, wasn't the film to be more porno than parody?

ZIEHM: Well, it started out to be the most expensive porno ever made. We were going to spend \$25,000 on it. What happened was that our art director, Mike Minor, was able to take just a little bit of money and create some incredible sets. Mike's sets were just so good that he inspired everybody to put more effort, and consequently more money, into the film. Also, the special effects wound up being more difficult to create, and more expensive to pay for. At the start of the film I knew next to nothing about special effects, and as we went along I realized that the knowledge of some of the people working with us was also very sketchy. We wound up getting into a much bigger production, money-wise, than we ever anticipated. When you get into matte paintings, miniatures and animation, it gets very expensive.

CFQ: Was it your intention to use special effects and animation from the start?

ZIEHM: Yes. In fact, when Mike Benveniste first brought me the script, I questioned his idea of three monsters. It seemed to me we were biting off an awful lot. Mike, however, was very optimistic, but he doesn't really think in practical terms. He said, "Don't worry. We have no problems. This guy's going to do this, and that guy will do that, and I can do this if I have to." And I believed.

CFQ: How were the special effects crews chosen?

ZIEHM: That's a good question... ah... they sort of evolved. Mike Benveniste had a film-buff friend named Mike Hyatt. Hyatt had aspirations of working in film, and he had carved an animation model for a school project. That's the monster you see at the end of the film. He said he had friends in the industry as well, though just how strong these friendships were we found out later. Anyway, through him we got some people to handle effects. Bill Hedge was one person. He animated the penissaurus, and was supposed to animate the beetle man, and Mike Hyatt was supposed to do the last monster.

There is a very funny story connected with all this. Hyatt started work animating the final monster and he was having tremendous difficulty. We had set him up with all the equipment he needed: camera, projector, scotchlite screen, etc. He'd come in with a little footage, or just a test, and it would look horrible. A few days later we

would ask if he'd gotten the shots we needed yet, and he'd say no, he had a ghost in his studio that kept upsetting his light-meter readings. We'd all laugh, ha-ha, that's funny. But then he'd come in the next day, and the next day with the same story. We finally asked him to tell us what was really going on, and he said to come out to his studio and he'd show us. Hyatt is a very strange guy, to say the least, but he'd helped us out a lot, so I went out to see his setup. He would turn on his equipment and tell us to watch the meter, a ghost would make it move. And of course, the ghost wouldn't show up that day. Eventually we came to the conclusion that Hyatt wasn't ever going to get that monster done. A side note to this is that he had practically adopted the monster, taking it all over town, demonstrating it in restaurants. So we figured it would be best to go out and get all the equipment, but we knew if he was there we would run into trouble—he would hide the monster, or something. We had to pull a little trick on him. We called him down to the office to pick up his check, and sent a truck to his house to pick up the camera, the other equipment and the monster. We moved everything out on him. Actually, it was a sad situation, in that it meant an awful lot to Hyatt, but it was either his feelings or the production.

After Mike Hyatt, Dennis Muren took over, and he was assisted by Dave Allen, who did a few things before disappearing, supposedly because he was sick. Then Bob Maine finished the monster. The beetle man was animated by Jim Danforth, and I consider his work the biggest break the film ever got. Jim had a meeting with Mike Benveniste, and he sensed the lack of organization, which came from lack of experience. We were doing a very ambitious film. So Jim decided to come onto the film, and he did all the matte paintings, and then took on the beetle man. The Swan Ship was executed by Dennis Muren.

CFQ: Why is Jim Danforth's name spelled backwards in the credits?

ZIEHM: Jim was very irritated with the whole project. He likes to be there from the start, organizing things. He knows what he is doing, and he doesn't like to have a million headaches every day. This film was just that, a million headaches. There was an animosity that grew slowly between all of us as we worked on the picture. My partner, Bill Osco, was driving a Rolls Royce and I was telling people I couldn't afford to pay them. Little conflicts arose and it became a real struggle. Jim wasn't used to these hassles. He felt that since he wasn't on the film from the beginning, and he was just called in to do repair work, he didn't want it presented as something he had done. He asked, in fact, demanded that his name not be put on the credits. I put it in backwards because I felt that if he ever wanted to point to it as his work, he could.

CFQ: He has nothing to be ashamed of. His animation of the beetle man is excellent.

ZIEHM: Jim has a great sense of humor, and he put some of it into the creature's movements. All along I had the struggle of making the crew understand that we were doing *FLESH GORDON*, and not *Flash Gordon*. I was always looking for the humor in a scene. Jim realized this and put in little comic touches like the creature's karate-chop motion with its claws.

CFQ: Of the total budget, how much was spent for special effects?

ZIEHM: If you include the opticals done in the optical house, I would say 2/3 of it. We spent nearly \$700,000, and nearly \$500,000 went for effects.

CFQ: Where did all that money come from? Who backed the film?

ZIEHM: All the money came from Graffiti Productions, the company Bill Osco and I own. At the time we were



making *FLESH GORDON*, we were also making a lot of little porno films, plus we had a few theatres, and these were generating income. One of the big problems was that we had gotten busted two-and-a-half years ago, and they were out to get us, so this put a crimp in our money situation. But we managed, using corporate funds, and getting credit in the form of people working for little or nothing. I still owe some money on the film.

CFQ: Did you experience copyright problems?

ZIEHM: No. Our contention was that it was a spoof or parody, and we've been very careful to point this out, even going so far as to state this in a title sequence at the film's beginning. *FLESH GORDON* is certainly inspired by Flash Gordon, there are certain similarities, but Flash Gordon never fought a Pterosaur, or got flushed down a toilet.

CFQ: Did you shoot in 16 or 35mm?

ZIEHM: All the live action was shot in 16mm and blown up to 35mm for theatrical release. All the effects were shot in 35mm for clarity and accurate registration.

CFQ: Did you do any dubbing, or were you able to use most of your original soundtracks?

ZIEHM: Most of the sound that you hear was originally recorded. We had a guy named John Brasher, and he recorded our sound. He got excellent sound in nearly impossible outdoor situations. We had to dub very little of the film. There is some, and if you have a good eye you might spot a word out of sync. It's a good thing we had the usable tracks we did, because at that stage we had very little money left.

CFQ: What was your ratio of footage shot to footage used?

ZIEHM: Our shooting ratio was ridiculously high. We shot something like 45,000 feet of 16mm, and almost 20,000 feet of 35mm. The final cut only runs about 7,000 feet in 35mm, so our ratio was about 12 to 1. There were some shots that were just very hard to get, like rocket flybys, zooms into miniatures, things like that. There was a lot more effects stuff shot than I would have liked to have seen. This was partly due to an animosity that grew between the effects crew. One group was saying we want to do everything over again, we don't like it. Mike Minor headed this group. He was originally supposed to handle all effects, but he left in the middle of the production to do another film in Jamaica. When he came back a year later, Dennis Muren had replaced him, doing some great work on his own, with the help of Tom Scherman, who built all the miniatures. Mike had ideas of re-doing just about everything, but he'd been away while Dennis had done some terrific stuff for the film. So a little battle ensued, and when Mike began re-shooting things, that's when our ratio started going up. I'd say no, don't re-shoot that, and Mike would reshoot it anyway, at night, and when I'd come in the next day there would be 2000 feet of film shot. That's how it got out of hand.

CFQ: What sequences were the most difficult to execute?

ZIEHM: The scene we had the most trouble with was the Swan Ship. Not that it was all that difficult to film. We just couldn't get organized on exactly how to do it. This was one of the scenes that Mike wanted to re-do after Dennis had filmed it. Dennis had done it by skip-framing, using a backlight. The continued on page 38

Left: Suzanne Fields and Prince Precious get acquainted when Flesh seeks help against the tyranny of Wang in the Forest Kingdom. Right: Fine character actor John Hoyt puts in a brief cameo appearance as Prof. Gordon at the beginning of *FLESH GORDON*.

FLESH GORDON

It's the best-mounted turd I've seen.

FLESH GORDON A Mammoth Films Release. 7/74. 78 minutes. In Metrocolor. A Graffiti (Howard Ziehm and Bill Osco) Production. Live action directors, Michael Benveniste, Howard Ziehm. Associate producer, Walter R. Cichy. Edited by Abbas Amin. Director of photography, Howard Ziehm. Cameraman, Lynn Rogers. Screenplay by Michael Benveniste and William Hunt. Art director, Donald Harris. Costumes by Ruth Glunt. Makeup, Bjo Trimble. Lighting, Bill Danevick. Properties, Tom Reamy. Sound recorder, John Brasher. Special visual effects created by David Allen and Mij Htrofnad. Special miniature construction by Greg Jein. Effects technicians, Douglas Beswick, Rick Baker, Greg Jein, Russ Turner, Craig Nueswanger. Special optical effects, Cinema Research, Ray Mercer. Title design, Corny Cole, Corny Films. Music composed and arranged by Ralph Farraro.

Flesh Gordon..... Jason Williams
Dale Ardor..... Suzanne Fields
Dr. Flexi Jerkoff..... Joseph Hudgins
Emperor Wang..... William Hunt
Prof. Gordon..... John Hoyt

With: Mycle Brandy, Nora Wieternik, Candy Samples, Steven Grummette, Lance Larsen, Judy Ziehm.

FLESH GORDON was a project that grew, not unlike a boil. Originally it was merely a hard-core porno film sort of spoofing the first Flash Gordon serial. Scenes of real copulation between most of the principal players with everything showing were filmed, and some of these remain in the finished film, but have been cropped. But someone with a hay-ganglet's-hold-the-show-right-here attitude expanded the project and ambition grew like a weed. Good independent effects and art men were hired and all seem to have done their best.

It's the best-mounted turd I've seen.

The script is shallow and sophomoric, even though someone pointed out once that sophomores can be pretty funny. Many of the situations, lines and gags are obvious, but some are pretty amusing all the same (the various titles and names are good examples of this: Dr. Flexi Jerkoff, Prince Precious, Wang the Impotentate of the Planet Porno, etc.). However, once you've heard the names and storyline, you've encountered about all the film has to offer. Some of the effects are good—the muttering Kong-like creature at the climax is interestingly designed but inexpertly animated. The spacecraft is handsome and the evil queen's swan ship is very impressive visually, but is rather badly handled by the effects crew.

Because of the way the film was made, that more and more money was poured into it from time to time, the effects are extremely erratic. At first the intention seems to have been to have deliberately inept effects, aping the Universal serials. But as more money was spent, more time was spent on the effects and attempts were made to create expert effects work. There are some effects in the film that are excellent, as it happens. At one point a beetle-like

creature has a fight with Flesh in a parody of the skeleton fight in *THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD*. This sequence was designed by Bill Hedge and animated by one of the two leading people in this area, whose name is given in the credits-on-screen as Mij Htrofnad (after he had requested his name be deleted altogether). This is the smoothest animation I've seen anywhere. But it isn't a very long sequence, and buried as it is in this film, will probably not be seen by people who might help Mr. Htrofnad's career. This same special effects genius seems also to have done several beautiful matte paintings, including one which looks like it walked in from *THE WIZARD OF OZ*.

A scene in which penis-shaped monsters erupt from the floor of a fleshy cave is also very well animated, apparently by Bill Hedge. A set of "raping robots" has been cleverly built by Tom Scherman to resemble mechanical men from various serials.

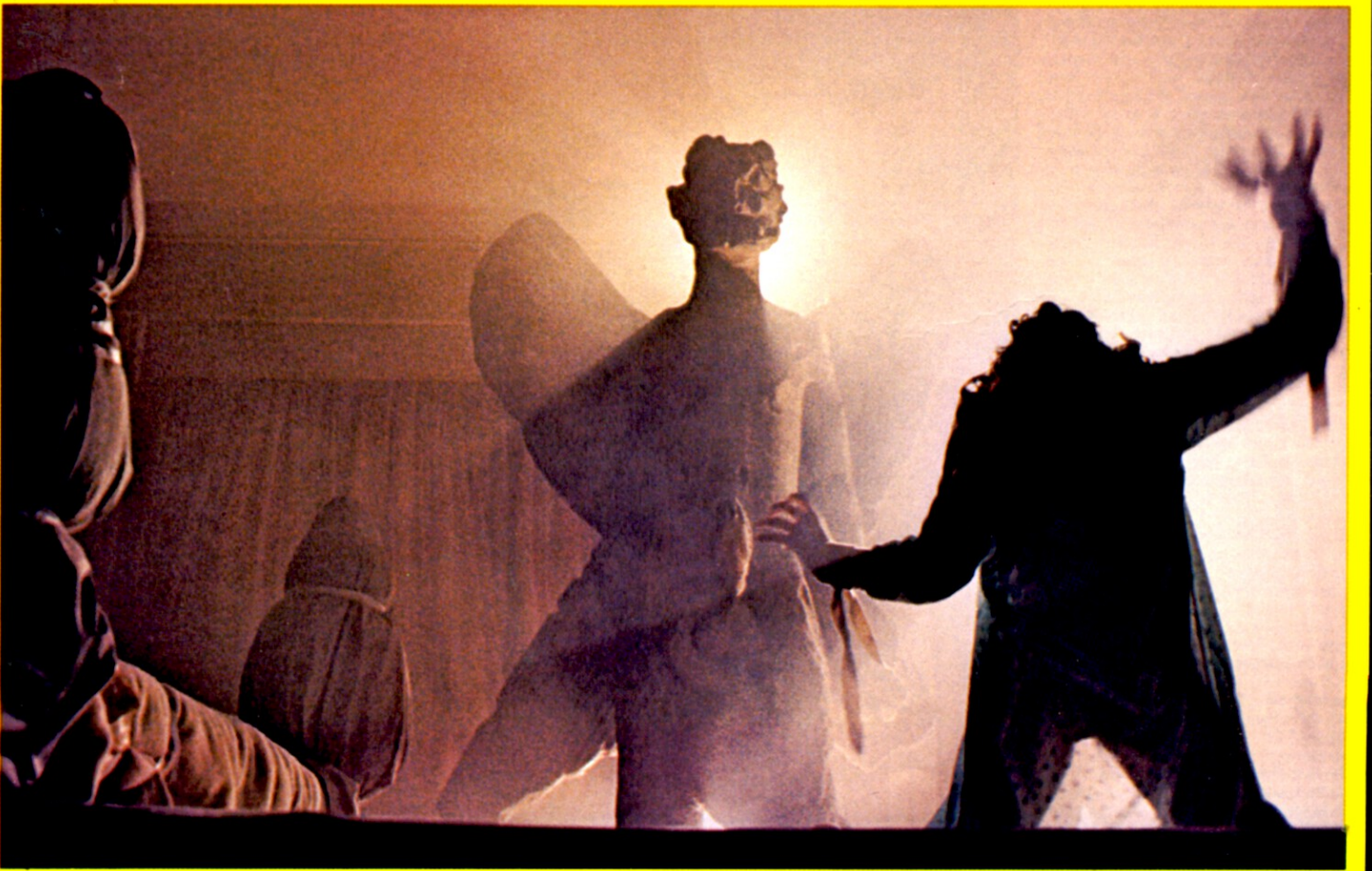
The acting is largely poor. Jason Williams as Flesh and Joseph Hudgins as Jerkoff both look exactly right, but are not exactly accomplished performers. Only John Hoyt, in his brief scene as Flesh's father, exhibits any real professionalism. William Hunt as Wang is reasonably good, in a high-school play fashion.

What's really wrong with the film is the direction. Directors Ziehm and Benveniste seem to choose the worst possible angle, set-up, and staging for every scene. Awkwardness is all. The camera moves when it shouldn't, is rigid when it should be mobile. Actors block the speeches of others. The pacing is erratic and annoying. Despite being amusing most of the humor is of a somewhat lower level than the jokes on Playboy's party jokes page. The whole film constantly verges on the merely smarmy and lewd. It isn't explicitly sexual enough to be pleasingly arousing; it isn't good-looking enough to get you by the low-key porno; and it isn't funny enough to really matter—except to a few in the crowd who might be hard-core science fiction and horror movie buffs. I myself probably found the film a lot funnier than would the average film-goer, simply because I recognized a few more references.

A film like *FLESH GORDON* needs more control than this one has. It needs a unifying idea and a clear goal, instead of flailing about trying to touch on as many lampooned points as possible. All too few satirical films seem to have the necessary clarity of vision, the specificity of purpose. Films like *THE LOVED ONE* and *BLAZING SADDLES* ultimately fail because they attempt too much. Being funny, when the goal is satire, just isn't enough. Satire has to be specific and controlled. A film out of control, like all of *FLESH GORDON* and much of *BLAZING SADDLES* might be funny, but they should be so much more than funny. That *FLESH GORDON* is also, by and large, a poorly-made film, simply adds to its failure. It is an attempt I'm glad to see made, but I wish the results and the whole had been as worthwhile as the promise and the parts.

Bill Warren





THE EXORCIST

THE BOOK, THE MOVIE, THE PHENOMENON

by David Bartholomew with interviews conducted by Dale Winogura

As few films ever do, THE EXORCIST has made history.

William Friedkin began shooting THE EXORCIST on August 14, 1972, in a hospital on Welfare Island, in New York. Neither he nor author and producer William Peter Blatty could possibly have been prepared for the scope of the experience that followed, and to a very real extent, still continues to develop.

The novel on which the film was based goes back to the late '40s and Blatty's college days at Georgetown University, where he read newspaper accounts of an exorcism incident involving a Mt. Rainier, Maryland, boy in 1949. Blatty, who had once considered entering the priesthood and becoming a Jesuit, began a massive research into the subjects of possession and demonology that only ended with the writing of the novel, having finally, almost accidentally, at a dinner party, interested a publisher (Bantam Books) in the project. Every other publisher approached by Blatty had flatly rejected the book. By this time, he had been typed as a writer of comedy, capers and whodunits. Blatty based his novel not only on the 1949 case, but also on an earlier one in Earlring, Iowa, in 1928, and on a host of historical cases dating back to the subject's Biblical origins, all of which he had unearthed in his studies. The novel, which Blatty has described as "a 350-page thank-you-note to the Jesuits" for his education, was completed by the summer of 1970. Bantam sold hardcover rights to Harper and Row who published it the following Spring. Almost immediately it became a best-seller, battling Thomas Tryon's *The Other*, published at roughly the same time, for the top of the charts.

As a veteran screenwriter, Blatty knew very well the dangers that movie producers posed to the writer and his work when purchased for film production. Determined to avoid this situation at all costs, Blatty decided to take on the deal-making himself. He interested producer Paul Monash (who bought the book on the profits of his BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID success) in a six-month option, and he, in turn, interested Warner Bros. for a reported purchase price of \$641,000, in making the film and agreeing to Blatty's strict, self-protective condition that he produce the script. Monash eventually left the deal with a hefty 9% cut of the film's eventual profits. Some say he was forced out by Blatty, a

stolen file, and a Warner Bros xerox machine, all involved in a brash bit of derring-do right out of one of Blatty's own screenplays. This maneuver left Blatty the sole producer.

Warner Bros insisted on mutual approval of director. Blatty was pushing a young director named Billy Friedkin. They had met a year before when Blatty and Blake Edwards were trying to find a director for GUNN, and later, when Blatty and Friedkin attempted to put together a production deal on *Twinkle, Twinkle, Killer Kane*. Soon, one by one, all of the Warner Bros choices declined: Arthur Penn was too busy teaching at Yale; Stanley Kubrick would not do it unless he could produce as well; and Mike Nichols, according to Blatty, "didn't want to hazard a film whose success might depend upon a child's performance." There were also several "mystery" directors suggested by Warner Bros but nixed by Blatty including one who Blatty, in his recent screenplay volume, dubs "Edmund de Vere" and who smacks pretty sharply of John Cassavetes. Other directors have now surfaced, proudly claiming to have refused the project, now that it has become fashionable to put down the film, with the latest being Peter Bogdanovich, in a recent issue of *Interview*. Blatty continued to push Friedkin. Fortunately, 20th Century-Fox released THE FRENCH CONNECTION and that finally ended Warner Bros' reluctance. Friedkin was hired and went to work on Blatty's nearly un-

filmable first draft screenplay (which runs to 226 pages in the present published edition). Ironically enough, Friedkin immediately charged Blatty with straying too far from his own novel.

In August of 1972, the *New York Times* devoted most of its Sunday "Arts and Leisure" section on movies to the start of filming of THE EXORCIST, the first of an unprecedented six times the *Times* would carry major articles in the weekly section on a single film. The Warner Bros publicity mill, without ever actually starting up, then died down. Most people, probably many in the trade included, promptly forgot about the filming.

Then came a coup of publicity that Harold Newman, who headed the publicity unit on the film, or anyone else in the business for that matter, could ever have even hoped to concoct. In a General Audience on November 15, 1972, Pope Paul VI delivered an address on the Devil and evil. According to the text in the Vatican newspaper, the Pope declared, "Evil is not merely a lack of something, but an effective agent, a living spiritual being, perverted and perverting. A terrible reality. . . So we know that this dark and disturbing Spirit really exists and that he still acts with treacherous cunning: he is the secret enemy that sows errors and misfortunes in human history. This question of the Devil and the influence he can exert on individual persons as well as on communities. . . is a very important chapter of Catholic doctrine which is given little attention today, though it should be studied again." With these words, the Pope shifted from the spiritual into the secular ad-pub business.

A bit later, the rumors began. The press seemed to have been unofficially banished from the film's shooting. By March, 1973, the film was reported (always vaguely) as over-budget and behind schedule. The original shooting plan of 105 days was stretched to 200 days. When one reporter asked Blatty when production had begun he replied, "I think it was 1822." Yet Friedkin maintained that Warner Bros, and especially its chief, Ted Ashley, were behind him 100% and were generously allowing him the kind of costly perfectionism usually foreign to Hollywood films. Consequently, the budget kept expanding: originally the film was to have cost \$4 million, then it was hiked to \$6 million (April, 1973), then to "over \$7 million" (May, 1973), and by the film's opening in December, to between \$8 and \$10 million. The figure, which has not been officially confirmed, is now rumored between \$10 and \$11 million.

The amount of truth in most of the stories that managed to filter out one way or another into the

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Top Left: Merrin stands on a pinnacle in Iraq to face an old enemy in one of his many guises. Bottom Left: During the exorcism the participants see, or think they see, the statue of Pazuzu.

press will probably never be fully determined. The rumors actually began with the novel. Blatty admits that he wrote it for, and with the mother/actress character Chris MacNeil modeled after, Shirley MacLaine, his then-neighbor in California. MacLaine liked the book, recognized that bits of dialogue in the book were her own words and phrases used in various conversations with Blatty, and was prepared to drop her current plans in order to film it. She was, however, unable to convince her business partner, British producer Sir Lew Grade, to buy the book. (She later went on to film her own occult thriller for Paramount, *THE POSSESSION OF JOEL DELANEY*.) Columnists later rather cruelly latched on to this MacLaine connection and suggested that the novel was essentially a thinly disguised true tale of MacLaine and her own daughter Sachi. According to Blatty, MacLaine still accuses him of "lifting" a photograph of Sachi to use, in distorted form, as the front cover artwork of the novel's hardcover edition. (Blatty believes that the photograph actually resembles his daughter.)

Linda Blair also became the subject of several stories. A former model with only minor acting experience (the two features in which she had bit parts are always unnamed), Linda was chosen by Friedkin from a field of 500 girls not only because she was not the typical Hollywood "moppet" who might take the role seriously and use it as a stepping-stone to a career, but also because she looked amazingly compatible with her screen mother Ellen Burstyn. She was 12 when the film began pre-production and 14 by the time it hit the theatre screens. She has not suffered the breakdowns, nightmares, or traumatic experiences as proclaimed in the press, nor has lightning struck her mother (as fiercely as Pauline Kael's scorn) for allowing her daughter to take the role. ("We saw the ad," says Mrs. Blair, "and thought it sounded like a fun part.") Although Mrs. Blair denies it, Friedkin claims to have given Linda a series of psychological and physical tests to make sure she could handle the rigors of the film role. Linda declares she simply followed Billy's orders and startles skeptical questioners with statements like "It could have been about a girl eating a lollipop." Although she says she'd rather be a horsewoman or veterinarian than an actress, Blair has since done a rather raw TV movie called *BORN INNOCENT*, in which she plays a young innocent corrupted at a reformatory for girls.

There is literally no end to the stories that floated through the media. When information is not forthcoming and questions remain unanswered, the imagination is free to roam. And Newman's publicity people were probably not altogether displeased to read how their film project, because of its subject matter, might be jinxed.

A replica of the house in Georgetown had been carefully constructed for interiors. At 2:30 one Sunday morning, with the building empty save for one guard, an electrical fire swept through it and burned it to the ground. It took six weeks to rebuild a two-story copy of it. By this time the crew had moved to the old Fox Movietone News studio in New York on West 54th Street. The bedroom set, built on a gyro the size and shape of a bowling ball, so that the entire room could be instantly shifted to any angle, went through many design changes before a workable one was discovered. Over \$75,000 worth of refrigeration equipment had to be lugged in and installed, just for the added realism of producing white spurts of breath from the actors' mouths. The extreme cold added severe problems to the shooting. At one point, the set's sprinkler system broke down, flooding the main set, causing a two week delay.

Almost all the actors had troubles of one sort or another. Von Sydow's brother died just as the Swedish actor had arrived in New York for his first scenes; he was later out ill for a week during the first week of shooting. The most tragic, of course, was the death of Irish actor Jack McGowan (Burke Dennings) who died preparing a stage production of "The Plough and the Stars" one week after completing his death scenes in the film. Ellen Burstyn wrenched her back and was out for several weeks. Friedkin reports that Jason Miller's young son was "struck down on an empty beach by a motorcycle that appeared out of nowhere, and his life [hung] in the balance for several weeks." Friedkin goes on, "All of the spe-

cial effects caused any number of injuries to the actors. There are strange images and visions that showed up on film that were never planned. There are double exposures in the little girl's face at the end of one reel that are unbelievable." A lot of costly reshooting was required. Not even the technicians escaped unscathed; during the shooting, one of the carpenters cut off a thumb, and a gaffer lost a toe.

In Iraq, the statue of Pazuzu was lost, causing a two week delay. The entire location trip was delayed from the Spring, which is relatively cool, to July, the hottest part of the summer when the temperature there soars to 130 degrees and more. Friedkin reports that out of an 18-man crew, he lost the services of 9 at one time or another due to sunstroke and dysentery.

Before the film was completed tempers flared, and Friedkin had Blatty barred from all post-production work. Four teams of editors frantically rushed to finish the film for its Fall dates. These eventually had to be delayed further as Friedkin fired Lalo Schiffrin just as he was about to finish scoring the film and then desperately searched around for new music. Although nobody is really sure how, the film was finally completed, tradescreened in Los Angeles and New York on December 21, and opened in the 20 key U.S. cities on the day after Christmas, 1973.

The response from the New York and national reviewers was almost predictable, from a star-spewing rave from the *Daily News* (Kathleen Carroll) to a harsh raspberry from Vincent Canby, who with unusual fervor eventually took to the pages of *The New York Times* twice to denounce the film. According to the *Times* compilation, the critical tally was as follows: 8 favorable (including the *News*, *Post*, *Rex Reed*, *Cue* and *Saturday Review/World*), 4 mixed (including Andrew Sarris and Crist), and 8 negative (including Canby, Kael, *Time* and *Newsweek*). A few months later, the more detailed criticism of the little magazines appeared, again, to predictable response, since the film had by then entered the backlash of opinion that all initially successful films eventually seem to suffer, particularly when the film-as-art snobism inherent to many of the film periodicals begins to treat a hugely popular movie. Interestingly enough, at the same time they were panning the film, they also cashed in on it by using stills from the film on their covers, and in one case (*Film Comment*) publishing pirated visual material. (Warner Bros. in strict accord with Friedkin, had put a clamp on all illustrations or stills of the film's makeup and special effects.)

THE EXORCIST inspired a great deal of comment from a host of figures in all areas of life who normally seldom function as film critics. Among them were:

Hal Lindsey (fundamentalist author): "There's a lot more going on in that film than just shock value. There are... powers at work during the showing of that film... setting the stage for the future attack of Satan."

Frank Kveton (theatre manager in Oakbrook): "My janitors are going crazy wiping up the vomit."

Sergei Kondrashov (Washington correspondent for the official Soviet journal *Investia*): "The culmination of the film is an extremely naturalistic mixture of pornography and sadism. Having made this Christmas gift to its God-fearing country, Warner Bros is rejoicing at the money being taken in... and predict more gigantic profits."

Rabbi Julius G. Neumann (Chairman, Morality in Media): "The movie is adding to the frustration and confusion of our youth claiming that whatever they do contrary to accepted religious and society's norm is not really of their own making, but that of the devil inside them."

Edwin Newman (NBC): "I am beginning to wish that somebody would exorcise exorcism. I think I'd even rather hear about the lines at service stations."

Rev. Billy Graham (who read the novel, tore it up, flushed it down the toilet and who refuses to see the film): "I would be opening myself up to satanic forces. I think we are dealing with a very dangerous and very strange situation. I

don't believe believers can be possessed by the devil."

Joe Flaherty (*Village Voice* writer): "The penance for those who contributed consciously to this travesty should not be exorcism but exercise, and the area recommended is between the ears."

Jerry Rubin (former political radical): "After seeing THE EXORCIST I got more in touch with the irrational within me. I am Regan. You are Regan. No Catholic ritual, no therapist, no miracle formula, no specific behavior can exorcise the unconscious, conditioned demons from us. Only we can do it... It can begin by realizing that THE EXORCIST is not an escapist movie. It is a mirror."

Samuel Z. Arkoff (AIP President): "The film is really a superhorror picture. But it's not looked at that way by the pseudointellectuals and artsy [types] who are putting it in a context way beyond that... [Audiences] have psyched themselves out on it. They want it that way."

Ted Fishman (New York City line standee in zero-degree weather, quoted in the *Times*): "We're here because we're nuts and because we wanted to be a part of the madness."

Jack Douglas (humorist): "I sure wish Karras were still alive—I've got a couple of kids I'd like to have him take a look at."

The audience response was immediate... and overwhelming. Warner Bros discovered to their surprise that little adpub work was necessary. According to *Variety*, they spent less than \$80,000 to open it in New York, a sum quite small for such a major and expensive feature with less than unanimous reviews going for it. Attendance records were set in most theatres where the film opened, instantly burying the negative reviews. The film was critic-proof, but then it moved far beyond that. In New York THE EXORCIST became the "hot" ticket. Scalpers with a good place in line could command an outrageous sum, and get it. People stood in lines for over four hours in all the nastiest weather a wintry Manhattan could throw at them: icestorms, snow or rain and bitterly cold winds. On January 18th, 3 more first-run theatres were pressed into service, and their previous box-office records promptly fell. A fifth house was added two weeks later.

It was the same story all over the country. The film ran into censorship problems only in Washington, D.C., where the U.S. District Attorney's office overruled the MPAA and banned all patrons under 17 years of age (with or without an accompanying adult) from the film, and in Boston, where the D.A. and The Sack Theatre chain agreed to observe an X rating.

The troubles, of course, only added fuel to the inferno. Stories flowed to the press and TV of people fainting and vomiting (most reportedly just after the masturbation scene). H. Robert Honahan, a district manager of a theatre chain in Berkeley, exclaimed, "I've never seen anything like it in the 24 years I've been working in theatres." People left the film shaking and nauseous and, at least a few, screaming. Heart attacks and at least one miscarriage were reported. In a Berkeley theatre, one man charged the screen to get the demon. Others couldn't sleep when they went home. At the very least, most viewers lost their appetites for a while. People began to seek psychiatric help in greater numbers, blaming the film for their problems. Church attendance began to rise in some areas; a minister in Oakbrook proudly noted, "We turned them away by the hundreds from my EXORCIST sermon." Priests began receiving more and more strange calls from troubled people who insisted they needed an exorcist. Theatre managers, bearing the brunt of the film's effect, reported that women succumbed to the film's power in larger numbers than men. (Incidentally, Friedkin noted in *Variety*, with no elaboration whatsoever, that he considers THE EXORCIST "a woman's picture.")

The crowds turning out for the film seemed to get rougher. The film's attraction for black audiences, which Warner Bros had absolutely not foreseen, began to heat into mildly racial confrontations, as white neighborhoods (as in New York, the chic East Side where the film originally open-

ed) and shopping and restaurant areas felt the unaccustomed crunch. In New York, fires were ignited along the street by line standees to keep warm. Although the film drew all kinds of people, oftentimes an uglier crowd prevailed. At the Paramount Theatre in New York, the last showing one particularly cold evening in February had to be cancelled when the crowd, afraid they wouldn't all get in after hours of waiting, mobbed the theatre. Henry Marshall, the first exhibitor to play the film in Toronto, reported, "It's a brutal crowd. I see nice people in the lineup and I tell them not to come in but they do anyway."

And indeed they did. But as so often happens, a string of wild successes simply prepares the way for failure. Warner Bros found, in extending bookings into smaller areas through the U.S., that many theatres had trouble in maintaining their 15 week minimums. On June 19, in a controversial move, Warner Bros four-walled the film into 110 theatres in the metropolitan New York City area alone with six-week minimum runs. The saturation booking failed by overkill; by the 5th week, the grosses had slipped to \$300,000 from the first week's total of over \$3 million. Although as of this writing the film is still playing on 42nd St in New York, for all practical purposes, *THE EXORCIST* has had done with New York.

A bit of perspective might be in order, at least from the point of view of audience response. The power of *THE EXORCIST* hitting the screens had a precedent of sorts in the opening in November, 1931, of the original *FRANKENSTEIN*. To ward off potential trouble (and perhaps to shrewdly ballyhoo it further), Carl Leammle ordered a "warning" to be delivered by Edward Van Sloan in a prologue to the movie. Denis Gifford, in his book on Karloff, notes that at previews people ran screaming from the theatre during the film. Other sources report ambulances standing ready at curbside for action and that theatre managers soon learned to keep a good supply of smelling salts handy. There was a loud cry of rage from parents and civic groups that the film was too horrifying and should play to adults only. As it was, the public objected so strenuously to the sequence with the Monster and the little girl that it was snipped from the American version and the ending altered as well. A contemporary trade reviewer for *Film Weekly* concluded his critique of *FRANKENSTEIN*: "The film has no theme and points no moral, but is simply a shocker beside which the Grand Guignol was a kindergarten... It is the kind of film which could only induce nightmares." Sound familiar?

Controversial films mean, if they're really not fooling around, lawsuits, or their threat. And *THE EXORCIST* has cooked a fine brew of them. The first to surface was a distraught Mercedes MacCambridge who claimed, perhaps excessively, that in providing the demon's voice, she was responsible for its power on the screen. ("If there was any horror in the exorcism, it was me!") She claims Friedkin promised her a credit line and then welched. Her tale of how she recorded the cries (and whispers) and vomiting sounds makes extremely bizarre reading, including her self-induced regurgitation ("swallowed 18 raw eggs and a pulpy apple") and physical restraint ("I had the crew tear up a sheet and bind me hand and foot") with the result of complete physical exhaustion and a ruined voice "for weeks." Friedkin answered by noting that her contract did not call for a screen credit (although one was quickly inserted into the film) and that he had been overruled on the issue by the Warner Bros legal department. He added that not all of the demon voice was solely hers, that a barrage of noises and sounds were incorporated and, indeed, that her words as originally recorded were "vari-pitched and re-recorded at slower speeds," all of which finally



The exorcism of Regan. Top: Father Merrin (Max von Sydow) incants the Roman ritual and Regan (Linda Blair) squirms in agony. Middle: The two priests watch in amazement as the little girl's body rises from the bed. Bottom: The end is near. Father Karras (Jason Miller) finds the body of stricken Father Merrin. Is evil triumphant or defeated? While Blatty's book is quite specific on the matter, Friedkin's film is tantalizingly ambiguous.



resulted in the final voice on the soundtrack. The squabble developed into a fairly bitter personal battle between the two with MacCambridge, after receiving her on-screen credit, demanding a direct and public apology from Friedkin. She received no such apology, but she did exert considerable pressure to get one by withholding her permission for Warner Bros to release a soundtrack album including scenes and dialogue from the film. In mid-October an arbitration board of Screen Actors Guild decided that MacCambridge was to receive 3.6% of all album royalties, an advance of \$3,000 and billing on the album jacket to be 100% the size of the other actors and with the additional billing "as the voice of the demon," but no apology, an area which the board declared was outside the realm of existing contractual obligations. For the record, for her film work MacCambridge received \$2,000 per week for four weeks work and \$2,000 for one additional day.

Actress Eileen Dietz was the second complainant to appear. In a dispute that has become quite nasty, she charged that she was the double for Linda Blair for much of the film and that most of the crucial scenes in the film were played by her and that Blair was receiving credit, and perhaps an award or two, for what was mostly Dietz's work. Almost everyone concerned with the film labeled her a self-server and discounted her charges. Dietz countered with a letter to *Variety* in March. Warner Bros then stopwatched the film and finally admitted that Dietz was on-screen for 28 1/4 seconds but still maintained that her work was hardly of the importance she claimed. Dietz has since curiously refused to participate in a Screen Actors Guild arbitration requested by Blair's lawyers. Dubbed the "Great Pea Soup War," the issue is still unsettled.

Other legal problems include a suit against *Newsweek* for publishing photos of Blair in demon makeup which were apparently snapped from a screen during a showing and published in an interview with Blair in the 1/21/74 issue. Also, Ken Nordine, a musician and soundman, has sued Warner Bros for \$35,000 due him for work done on setting up sound effects and voice-overs but not paid for. His lawyers contend that Blatty was responsible for not accepting the work.

Other non-legal hassles include the possible bad blood between Friedkin and Ted Ashley as the December openings grew near and Friedkin, having fired Schiffrin, pleaded for an extension to work out a new score for the film (Friedkin originally wanted Bernard Herrmann to do the music) and later, when Friedkin felt that the Warner Bros publicity department should push Jason Miller harder for the various best acting awards. This is not to mention the fueling between Friedkin and Blatty during the latter stages of shooting and post-production, although these problems, with a great show of mutual backslapping and boyish grins, at least for the photographers, seem to have been patched over.

The religious furor the film aroused centered, as was to be expected, in the Catholic Church. Friedkin had used three priests as advisors and given one of them, Rev. William O'Malley, S.J., a featured acting role. Many commentators seemed upset not with the fact of the film as much as with the participation of the priests, as if their work on it contrived to lend the support of the Church to the film.

None of the religious experts could agree on the film's effect although most were negative. One of the positive views came from Father Michael Callahan in Los Angeles who stated, "If it makes people think about the meaning of good and evil for an hour, it'll do more good than a lot of religious study programmes." Most were not that optimistic. The Rev. Juan Cortes, a Jesuit at Georgetown University, calls the film "not help-



Jason Miller as Father Karras. Top: Director William Friedkin discusses the motivation of Karras during the exorcism with Miller and von Sydow (off camera). Middle: Karras bears the burden when his Uncle (Titos Vandis) has his mother committed. "What I going to do? Put her in big hospital, Timmy! Who going to pay for that?" Bottom: Karras ministers to his aging mother on one of his visits. Moreso than the novel, *THE EXORCIST* is the story of Karras.

ful to society... You can't bring people to God by scaring them to death. You can't do a positive thing by negative means." Theologians warned that the film distorted church teachings about the Devil, exorcism, and the function and mien of priests. The Rev. Richard Woods of Loyola University strangely noted that the priests, in reality, would not have been allowed to perform the exorcism—a belief that backs up what many feel to be one of the indictments of *THE EXORCIST* against the Church—and he adds, "They departed from the ritual in the most stupid and reckless manner [trying] to fight the demon hand to hand instead of relying on the power of God." Rev. Eugene Kennedy, also at Loyola, faulted the film for ascribing "mysterious and mystical power to the priest." He calls the film "the GOING MY WAY of the nineteen-seventies." Rev. Woods concludes that the film regrettably stirred up "memories of all those descriptions of hell that you got from nuns" and that it "reflects the view that you are doing people a spiritual favor if you scare the hell out of them." The Archbishop of Canterbury, perhaps voicing the Pope's 1972 message, said that the film created a "credence for demonic possession which is mostly fiddlesticks." Most shrill of all, according to a letter writer to *Films and Filming*, was a leading member of the Church of Scotland who indicated he'd "rather take a bath in pig manure than see the film."

More mundane complaints included the film's lack of authentic detail, that, for instance, Jason Miller failed to say his Masses properly. Still, the priests who served as technical advisors continue to stand, for the most part, behind the film. Rev. O'Malley, writing an article for *The Jesuit*, indeed treated the subject matter and its potential effects rather matter-of-factly and dwelled instead on the novelty, for him, of movie-making. Another, the Rev. John J. Nicola, thinks that the reaction to the movie equals the Middle Ages' St. Vitus's Dance, and while not faulting the morality of the film, suggests that because of the "hysteria" produced, the general public should perhaps not have been offered the film. The largest part of the problem, perhaps, were all the people running off to priests demanding an exorcism in the belief they were possessed. Although most were directed to psychiatrists, others were believed.

Doctors, psychiatrists, and psychologists, reacting to the reported flood of people seeking help, and perhaps because their professions, too, were not treated so rosy in the film, approached it from a different angle. Dr. Louis Schlan, a Chicago psychiatrist, states flat out, "There is no way you can sit through that film without receiving some lasting negative or disturbing effects." The key word there is "lasting." Writing in *Saturday Review/World* in June, Dr. Ralph R. Greensen of UCLA calls the film "a menace to the mental health of our community.... It pours acid on our already corroded values and ideals. In the days when we all had more trust in our government, our friends, and ourselves, *THE EXORCIST* would have been a bad joke. Today, it is a danger." Dr. Judd Marmor, from Los Angeles, concurs, "We have many disturbed people in our society and a film like *THE EXORCIST* will spread like an infection." It is interesting to note that many seemed to blame the film for simply reflecting the corruption of society, skewering the film as disease, not symptom.

However, as with the religious criticism, no consensus of opinion, plus or minus, could be reached. Dr. David Abrahamson, a psychiatrist, applauds the film for the opposite reason, that it offers to a hero-less age "a sense of identification," and while cleverly exploiting pre-existent audience guilt, it offers genuine esthetic catharsis. Dr. Walter Brown, a psychiatrist at Mt. Sinai, recognized a linkage to his own function: "I believe in all that stuff. In a way, all psycho-analysis and psychotherapy are forms of exorcism, of getting rid of demons."

Much of the ruckus raised by the film, not only from the medical and religious camps but from virtually every area of society, zeroed in on the film's receiving an R rather than an X rating. The Catholic conference, usually stricter than the MPAA, gave *THE EXORCIST* an unharsh A-IV rating, an adult classification which means the film is moral but may offend some (adult) viewers. Several commentators hinted that with such

high finance at stake, Warner Bros played a little game of politics with the MPAA for the lesser rating. The charge was stoutly denied by MPAA head Jack Valenti. Replying in the *New York Times* in February, he mentioned what he felt to be the film's unwavering morality, the thematic necessity of the strong language, and specifically, "There is no overt sex" and "no excessive violence." He was strongly debated on the latter account, a charge to which the MPAA has always been particularly prone, of punishing films via ratings for sexual content and going easy on violence. Most criticism depended on the individual critic's overall view of the film, and oddly enough, audiences seemed almost evenly divided as to whether the film's ending was positive (Good triumphs) or negative (Evil triumphs). To this effect, *Newsweek* picked up a rumor that Blatty and Friedkin were going to shoot a new ending to clarify the film, which set off some amount of telephoned questions to Warner Bros, but the story was not true.

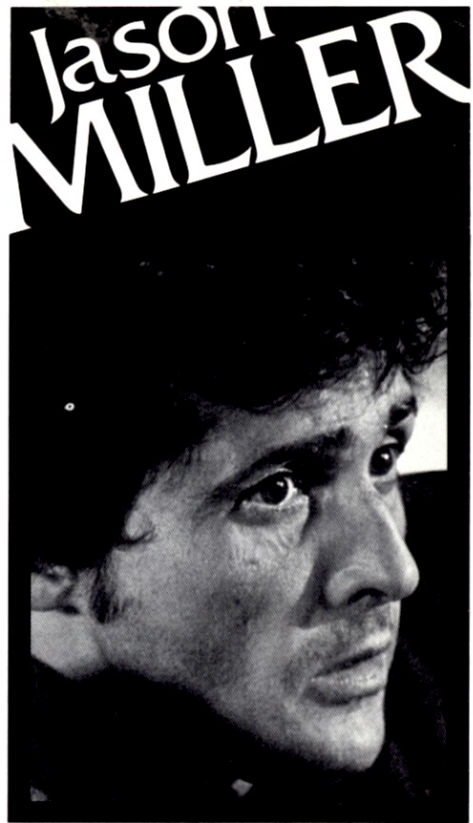
It is highly indicative of the atmosphere the film created that such a rumor could take hold so quickly. Another began when Warner Bros opened the film in the 100-theatre spread in New York City mentioned earlier. A story began circulating that the film had been cut for the wider distribution. One fan claimed that when he'd seen the film in its original booking, it had been over three hours long. Warner Bros was swamped with calls which forced them to take out expensive newspaper ads verifying the film's completeness: "Contrary to rumors, *THE EXORCIST* that is now playing in all 100 theatres is the original—the full and complete film. Nothing has been cut. Not one single frame. Not one single word. Warner Bros guarantees it."

With the hefty U.S. grosses (the film alone accounted for 14% of the total U.S. boxoffice for January, 1974) added to the bright foreign outlook, Ted Ashley announced in the *New York Times* that he expects the film to amass \$110 million worldwide. (This figure is down from an earlier one of \$180 million. For comparison, the gross of *THE GODFATHER* now stands at \$155 million worldwide.) The film has also spurred sales of Blatty's novel. Before the film had opened, the novel in hard covers had appeared on the *Times*' bestseller list for 55 weeks. The Bantam paper edition sold 5.5 million copies, and with the film, Bantam printed an additional ten press runs amounting to another 5.5 million copies, which makes it the 2nd all-time best-selling paperback (after *The Godfather* at 12 million). It has been translated into over a dozen languages.

THE EXORCIST has not collected all the awards Warner Bros and other observers had expected. The first of the major glamour awards, given in January, are the Golden Globes, and the film captured four: film, director, screenplay, supporting actress (Blair). However, the industry awards, such as those of the Directors Guild of America and the Writers Guild, bypassed the film completely, as did, for the most part, the Oscars. Out of ten nominations for the latter, *THE EXORCIST* won only two (sound recording and screenplay) which prompted Blatty to publicly blast the Academy; he called the awards a "disgrace" and added, "The Academy should fold its tents and go back to baking apple strudel or whatever they can do well." In the *Hollywood Reporter*, Blatty claimed that George Cukor had led the attack on the film and denounced it to the Academy membership who shortly after collectively decided that no special effects or makeup awards were to be given. In Blatty's eyes, it seemed another Watergate.

Billy Friedkin continued to work from his office at Warner Bros in Hollywood, overseeing the preparation of the foreign language versions of the film. In September, he closed down the office, his work completed, and shifted to Universal where he began setting up his next project. Ironically enough, Friedkin left Warner Bros within a few days of the announcement of the departure from Warner Bros of Ted Ashley, who had backed Friedkin and the film so faithfully through what must have been a corporate hellfire. As few films ever do, *THE EXORCIST* has made history, for whatever reasons, and now it seemed to close an era, at least for Warner Bros.

David Bartholomew



Jason Miller received an Academy Award nomination for his portrayal of Father Karras in *THE EXORCIST*, his first motion picture role. The character of Karras, moreso than in Blatty's novel, is the center of the film's story, and I sought out Miller to discuss how the character developed. I found him working on his latest picture, *NICKEL RIDE* for 20th Century-Fox and director Robert Mulligan, in which he again works as an actor, in the lead role of a gangster. Acting fame, however, is only a recent development for Miller, who is better known for his achievement as a writer. In 1972 his play *That Championship Season* received the New York Drama Critics Award, a Tony Award, and the Pulitzer Prize as the best play of the year. Miller is currently writing a screenplay based on his award-winning play to be directed by Franklin J. Schaffner.

CFQ: How were you chosen to play Karras?

MILLER: Billy Friedkin went to see *That Championship Season*, and there is a lot of mention of Jesuits in there. On the back of the program was a picture of me, and also the fact that I was an actor. Billy operates a lot on intuition, so he contacted my agent who contacted me. I thought at first he wanted me to do a screenplay of the book. When I went to see him, I found he wanted me to read the script in terms of acting Karras. He gave me the script, I read it, liked it (the first draft, the one in the book *William Peter Blatty On The Exorcist*), and said I would like to try it. I came to LA to do the screen test in some big old warehouse, with a papier-mache bridge. I said I didn't want to do anything from the script, I'll just improvise. So we did the scene on the bridge with Ellen. Then, I had to say Mass. I had every vestment for a High Mass: for the chalice they had an old grapefruit can, the Host was a Ritz cracker, and the Gospel was Blatty's book.

CFQ: Do you think the picture is basically about Karras and his change of character?

MILLER: I think that's part of it. I think Blatty balances it very well, but inescapably the main attention of the audience is Regan, the girl possessed. I've often maintained, and I was talking with Billy and Blatty about this, if you take the

Interview conducted by Dale Winogura at Columbia Pictures, Hollywood, June 1974. This transcript has been edited slightly.

exorcism out of the picture, with the kind of Dostoevskian character Blatty created in Karras, you can do an entire movie out of him, without touching on the supernatural. You are dealing here with mythical guilt, a guilt that forces transcendence by some kind of sacrificial act. It's not simply the clinical guilt that we're inundated with in magazine articles. I mean you associate it with Kafka and Dostoevski—it's deep.

Although we call it Mother Church, to Karras it's Father Church. Most of the older Jesuits he talked to when he said, "I've lost my faith," he's really giving confession to his father. You'll notice that there's a complete absence or no mention of his father—not even a picture.

You are dealing with a profound metaphysical change in terms of Karras, because that which has sustained him on a spiritual and emotional level has shifted away from him, and he's really in a void. He is a man of science as well as a man of religion, and it's the irreconcilable opposites that drive him mad, and creates this enormous guilt. So his entire life is going through a profound change, and in the middle of it, he's faced with incorporating himself into an experience that is kept in the closet by his church, and his rational mind says it does not, cannot exist. The only way he can meet it is on grounds of compassion and faith. But he feels that his faith is lost. It can only, finally, come out in an act of violence, which is a terrific irony. Presumably, his compassion for the little girl only takes him so far, then suddenly the existence of The Devil forces a mental thrust into re-contemplating the existence of God. The sacrifice, the return of his faith, is through a violent, half-mad gesture. His faith, by a confrontation with evil, is restored. Yet the final image is always ambiguous. You cannot become symmetrical in dealing with good and evil.

CFQ: There are strong indications that it all could be happening in the mind of Karras.

MILLER: I think that's a very interesting technique that Billy's applied here, where there is that ambiguity. I think, on a subliminal level, that's one of the powers of the film. Some of those multi-dimensional layers aren't really explored by the critics because they're not capable of it. They do not possess sensibilities of that subtlety. After a while they get like busdrivers—they hate the job. They become desensitized, impersonal, and destructive. Their rage and frustration at their own, quite possibly, unrealized creative efforts is a weapon they use to attack many films with. A really good critic should be like a really good film.

CFQ: I would disagree with the many critics who do not see THE EXORCIST as a compassionate film.

MILLER: They're used to seeing films of the genre being treated with sentimentality instead of compassion. When it is treated with compassion, they can't recognize it. What they were looking for was that softening influence, that lukewarm sentimentality, which Friedkin and Blatty both denied them, and rightly so. What occurred then was compassion.

CFQ: What are your feelings about the Motion Picture Academy?

MILLER: It's community out here. There are power cliques that run it, with taste-makers and taste-deciders. The line between admiration and envy is the width of a hair.

CFQ: Some people can't relate to the film's message that there are a lot of mysteries we can't solve. They want easy answers.

MILLER: That's the significance of one of the most terrific scenes in the film—the pneumoencephalogram. It's not there to shock or disgust, it's there to graphically show the inability of our sciences to define just what is possessing this girl. It's interesting that it's a psychiatrist who mentions exorcism. That's a lovely irony.

Even the technical, clinical jargon, after a while suddenly becomes (and it's paced very well) a little ridiculous to an audience, in the face of what they have been experiencing behind that door. It questions the efficacy of science in its inability to define certain phenomena, and leaves us with the fact that we are prey to mystery.

CFQ: One of the secrets of the film's success are the many different aspects one finds on consecutive viewings.

MILLER: The texture is so dense, and there are so many things that Billy threw away or hid that will be discovered in successive viewings. Nothing is really wasted. It's impossible to receive the full dimension in one sitting.

CFQ: When you read the script did Karras appeal to you as being part of your own experience?

MILLER: Oh, very much so. I was raised as an Irish Catholic, and had a great deal of influence from the church, raised within its cultures, rubrics, and rites. I was struck by what Blatty had caught, that elusive mystery of a man becoming a priest, and the quiet tragedy of a man losing his faith. He really is "the exorcist," Mer-rin is the "formal exorcist." A formal exorcism doesn't work here, it's an act of human love that works, coming out of violence.

CFQ: Did you find, in the fragmentation of the shooting, that your concept of Karras changed?

MILLER: That's the danger of shooting out of sequence, and having 2-to-3 weeks off between shots. The character can suddenly let go of you because the reality of everyday life starts to intrude. I did a great deal of preparation, and the 2-to-3 weeks I had off, I used it to let the character mature, and let it ripen. Before I played a scene, I saw or felt it maybe five or six different ways, and it was just a matter of eliminating, and finding the best approach, without painting everything in huge, gashing strokes. That was one of the great dangers with Karras, it could lend itself to all kinds of gross self-indulgence.

CFQ: That crane shot introducing Karras is quite remarkable.

MILLER: During that shot, you hear Ellen saying, "You have to change within the system." That's where he's at. The audience may get it on a very peripheral level, many of them won't, but the fact is that it's there in the overall concept, and for the hyper-sensitive viewer to pick up.

CFQ: THE EXORCIST affects people not just because of the makeup and special effects, but because of the layers beneath that.

MILLER: Almost every sanctuary in the film is violated—the church, a child's room, a hospital. All the sanctuaries people use are questioned in THE EXORCIST. That's what really disturbs people at a very deep and vulnerable level of their being. Karras' sanctuary, the church, has no solace for him. His privacy is also desecrated because of the possession, in the fact that he has to deal with it.

CFQ: That scene in the mental hospital is very revealing of the character of Karras.

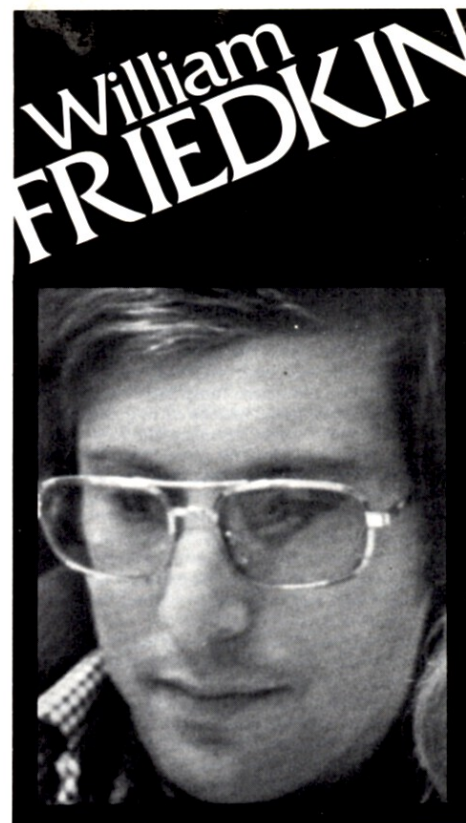
MILLER: These deranged, abandoned people, coming to him, to that black symbol he wears, respond to what he represents. By pushing them away, he's telling us what he feels, what his interior state is. That gesture tells you more about Karras than the dialog. It's the same with the park sequence when he tries to push the mother away. Because of his lack of faith, he's no longer equipped to deal with what his vocation deals with: human pain, misery, and suffering.

What Friedkin and Blatty also did was give the inanimate a lot of life, like the medal, the statue, the prayer book, and the medical machines. Little things are beautifully weaved into the overall texture. When I go downstairs and look at her paintings, after she throws up on me, if you look closely there's some red-and-green putty she has that the statue was desecrated with. It doesn't satisfy anything, but it keeps alive doubt.

CFQ: Were there any specific directions Billy gave you that really stand out in your mind?

MILLER: He gave me a thousand bucks, and told me to live in Georgetown for three weeks with the Jesuits. That was the best direction he could've given me. The suit that I wore—I went down into the cellar of the Jesuits' seminary, and there are these rows of black suits on hangars that had been worn by deceased Jesuits. So I went down and picked out my suit.

Billy, Blatty, and myself worked very closely on the interior construction of the character. One of the things Friedkin did that was invaluable, we had rehearsal two-to-three days before we shot a scene. The material was constantly being deepened, and Blatty would re-write, and he and Billy would discuss with everyone. It was a process of creative sharing, and Billy would place a design on it and stage it. They were ideal circumstances for an actor.



Although we published an extensive interview with director William Friedkin concerning his work on THE EXORCIST in our previous issue, I felt that it did not adequately penetrate the controversy and smokescreen of erroneous criticism and misinterpretation that has arisen to surround the film. I interviewed Friedkin to learn and clarify his opinions concerning these areas of controversy. Many months after the release of THE EXORCIST, he was still to be found in his mammoth office at Warner Bros, preparing the foreign language versions of the film. Friedkin is possessed of a pleasingly relaxed and assured attitude, as well might be one who has directed two extremely successful films in a row (the previous one, THE FRENCH CONNECTION). He has a powerful ego, but one tempered with humility and understanding, that makes talking with him both a challenge and a great experience. Friedkin has since moved over to Universal Pictures to prepare his next, undisclosed, film project.

CFQ: Do you think psychiatrists are exaggerating about the effect THE EXORCIST has had on people?

FRIEDKIN: I don't really know. I don't want to say there is no reason for concern on the part of psychiatrists. I personally don't feel that any picture by itself, without certain social conditions being given up front, has the power to turn somebody into a raving maniac.

I was in Pittsburgh not long ago, and I read an account there of a doctor who said he took twelve mental patients to see it, and the picture irrevocably drew them into hopeless insanity, and that they were now beyond cure. You have to take into account (and this is something the newspapers never do) the mental condition of the person before he went in. It is possible of course that somebody seeing THE EXORCIST, or any other work given much less attention by the newspapers or by the public, in a state of mental imbalance can become further unbalanced by an encounter with a friend, a relative, or a stranger.

I don't think there's a convincing argument that freedom of the screen should be limited, or that "this or that" picture is harmful to someone's stability, even including hardcore porno-

Interview conducted by Dale Winogura, May 14, 1974 at the Warner Bros studio in Burbank, California. The transcript has been edited slightly.

graphy which I find personally to be harmless.

CFQ: The *NSA Quarterly* said the film's shock value is a way of giving people's fears a kind of expression to which they relate. Do you agree?

FRIEDKIN: No, I don't. It was not my intention to do this. I made the film because it was a good story. I never thought of what psychological effect it would have on anyone. I intended to make a picture that would first and foremost be an engrossing work of fascinating entertainment. The hullabaloo that's taken place is a big mystery to me frankly.

I saw *PSYCHO* when I was a kid, and I was very terrified by it. Fortunately, I was able to overcome that. I have friends who are very intelligent who can't bring themselves to see the picture because they know what it's liable to do to them. I understand that.

I made the film as an overview of an event involving five characters who interested me. I don't know the probability as regards literal possession and the possibility of exorcism. I'm not knowledgeable enough in that area.

CFQ: Are you reluctant to discuss the implications of what you were trying to do in the film?

FRIEDKIN: I'm not reluctant. I have thought about these things. I tend to think about the physical problems of production, which are many. Occasionally, things occur to me in terms of deeper meaning. But the main thing that concerns me is how to achieve the story. If there is deeper meaning, it's only "by the way."

A friend of mine in the clergy sent me an article from a Catholic paper. Some clergyman suggested that the story was a homosexual fantasy, that Karras and Merrin were in a male bond to physically torture this little girl. The girl stabbing the vagina was a gesture of female hatred, and the passionate involvement of these two men ends in death over the actions of this little girl and her vaginal problems. Presumably, anyone looking for that sort of thing is going to come up with something equally as far-fetched. I must say it never occurred to me, but when the guy puts up such a convincing case, what can I tell you?

CFQ: Do you believe in the devil?

FRIEDKIN: I think it is possible that many people form a moral code based on beliefs that are outside the tangible and rational. My moral standards were formed when I was very young, and they did have a lot to do with the belief that I would not get my ultimate reward in heaven if I fucked-up here on earth. Those are hard things to shake, and the older I get, I don't find any reason to abandon that. I find more reason to say anything is possible. The more time I spend thinking about those concerns outside my own narrow ones, the more I think it's possible that higher and deeper levels of consciousness are out there, and the life we lead here is just a little ways along.

CFQ: You believe in heaven and hell then?

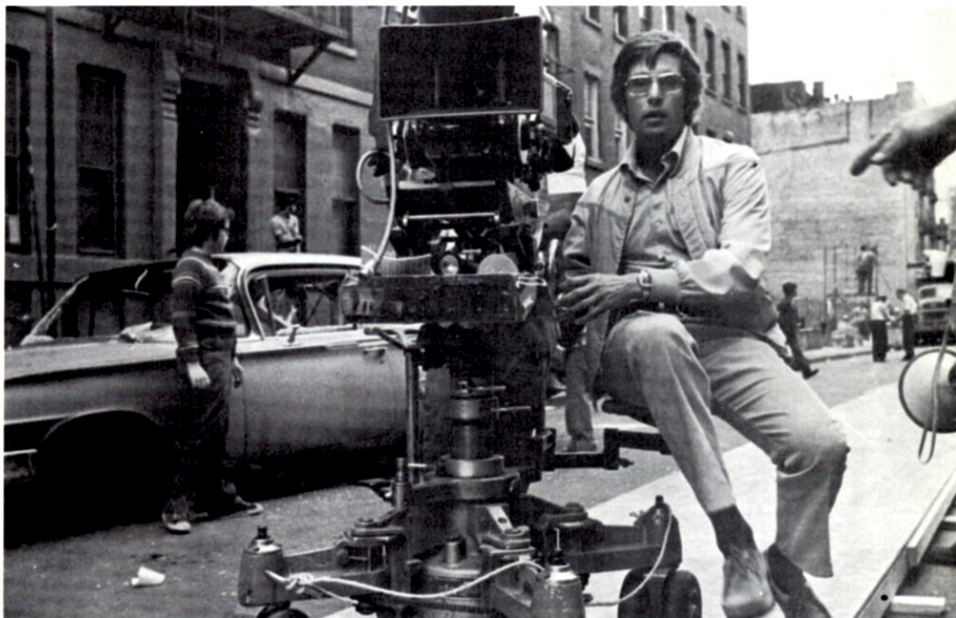
FRIEDKIN: I believe that heaven and hell exist, as other levels of consciousness. I'm fascinated not by the universe that encompasses mankind, but by the mind that encompasses the universe. That is one underlying factor of my interest in this picture, and all the pictures I've made, but this one especially. The mind that can conceive of possession and exorcism exists within ourselves, not outside.

CFQ: Do you feel the belief in a personified devil is an escapist viewpoint?

FRIEDKIN: It depends on the individual. I don't think you can make a generality out of that. It isn't what you believe, it's how you act on your beliefs. I find many worthwhile things in Catholic doctrine. I can't accept the whole enchilada however.

CFQ: In the opening Iraq scenes there is a feeling that something is closing in on Merrin.

Director William Friedkin at work. Top: Friedkin gives instructions to Linda Blair to prepare her for a scene with Ellen Burstyn. Middle: Billy, as everyone calls him, listens to cinematographer Owen Roizman explain a camera set-up on location in New York. Bottom: Friedkin goes over critical action in the levitation scene with Miller and von Sydow. The refrigerated set necessitated the wearing of insulated clothing. Friedkin calls his film a drama, not a horror film.





FRIEDKIN: Something is closing in on all of us. The sounds in that sequence were meant to convey his inner state. Merrin is a man near the end of his life, and he's very expectant of death.

CFQ: When he faces the statue of Pazuzu, he seems to be challenging it.

FRIEDKIN: That interpretation is possible because you don't see his face at that point. That's one of the things I let the viewer fill in. What was intended in that sequence was that in a land of mystery, certain portents are uncovered by an old man that bring premonitions that are later fulfilled. I added the St. Joseph medal which was not in the book, which is something that is passed from hand to hand and ends up in the hands of Father Dyer at the end. The reason for that was again to let the audience have its own interpretation as to what it means. It is either a talisman of good or evil depending on what you bring to the film. The statue of Pazuzu is obviously a symbol of evil.

CFQ: **THE EXORCIST** is on a much higher spiritual plane than other horror films.

FRIEDKIN: I wasn't thinking of the horror film genre at all. I thought of it primarily as a suspense film. The quality I look for most in a picture I'm directing is the suspense factor, the race against the clock.

CFQ: Do you plan your films carefully?

FRIEDKIN: Sure, very carefully. I seldom deviate from a plan I make weeks, months in advance. I would say I go about 80-85% with a planned sequence of shots and angles. I let everyone on the cast and crew know what's coming up with primitive drawings as a guide. Every day is a continual re-adjustment, but if you don't have a plan, you have nothing to adjust from or to.

CFQ: In the dissolve from Iraq to Georgetown, we go from light to dark. Was this intentional?

FRIEDKIN: Yes. Every scene was planned for its light and dark values, even down to the actors within a shot. I tried to alternate those values as much as I could.

CFQ: One of the reasons the crucifix scene is as effective as it is, is that it is brightly lit.

FRIEDKIN: We overlit the scene. The cameraman was reluctant to do that, and once we did it, the lab was reluctant to print it that way. They printed it at the bottom of the scale, totally in the dark, and I screamed at them to get it up four points brighter. That's not a new concept. Hitchcock did it in pictures like **SHADOW OF A DOUBT**, where most of the action takes place in broad daylight.

CFQ: Supernatural horror in the daytime is rather unique in films, with a few exceptions.

FRIEDKIN: I attempted to make **THE EXORCIST** as realistic as possible. No one gives a histrionic performance out of keeping with human behavior. That's why I cast it the way I did. The one mistake I sort of made in casting was Lee J. Cobb, who gives the best performance in the picture I think. I did it as kind of a crutch. I wanted one guy in there that the audience could relate to. I was going to cast Studs Terkel in the role of Kinderman. He would have been more real, and less an archetype. I don't want to work with someone who is known as a great actor, like Olivier. I'm interested in involving the audience in a story, and making them forget that there are actors.

CFQ: In the beginning you undercut the Chris/Regan relationship and their "good times" together with the constant denial of the intrusion of any kind of outside force. As in **THE BIRDS**, evil seems to arrive when goodness becomes too frail to stand on its own.

FRIEDKIN: I'm not conscious of that, but it's valid. The scenes with Chris and Regan were largely improvised. I don't like **THE BIRDS**, however.

Top: The amazingly life-like, full-size dummy of Linda Blair constructed by make-up artist Dick Smith. Constructed for the masturbation scene where Regan turns her head around a full 180°, the dummy was used only briefly in the film but was conceived and designed for more extensive use. Bottom: Dick Smith prepares to cast Linda Blair's leg for the construction of the dummy in his New York workshop. Smith performed many of the tasks often misidentified as special effects.

CFQ: When we first see Burke, there is something unreal about him.

FRIEDKIN: I was conscious of introducing all the major characters, except Karras, from behind. Everybody is sort-of snuck up on, or discovered. We come up behind them, almost like an unseen force. Karras, on the other hand, is the person to whom the whole thing is directed. He is met head-on. We literally push in on Burke because he's the first to go. What lead me into that is my belief that fear is always something behind you.

CFQ: On Karras' second visit the demon says "What an excellent day for an exorcism," as if it's teasing him to do something.

FRIEDKIN: My attitude about that scene was two-fold. First of all, we needed some levity somewhere along the line. My feeling is that if one were spirited off by the Frankenstein monster, after you got over the initial shock of being in the presence of this thing, you'd soon be playing chess together, trying to do something to pass the time. I put the scene on that level, and did it as kind of a Shavian dialogue, wherein they're exchanging pleasantries and witticisms.

CFQ: In the scene where Chris and Regan are playfully rolling on the floor, the camera moves in placing them in shadows and tellingly revealing the lies they live with.

FRIEDKIN: I think that's very apt. What the shot is saying is that, and the fact that they're like minor canvas characters in a much larger canvas.

CFQ: I get the feeling the demon has been in that house a long time.

FRIEDKIN: My feeling is that the demon just arrives at that point in the story when we want it to arrive, just as any character walks in the door. As in *THE BIRTHDAY PARTY*, Goldberg and McCann just walk in. What is it about this little girl that made her be possessed? Who the hell knows? It's not the author's province to speculate. If we had cluttered up *THE EXORCIST* with a lot of cockamamie explanations...

CFQ: ...it wouldn't be effective because the audience would be more concerned with the explanations than the people. That's why Hitchcock rarely has any.

FRIEDKIN: Except for *PSYCHO* at the end, with that lousy, gratuitous explanation directed at a ten-year-old mind.

CFQ: On his way to visit his mother Karras sees kids demolishing a car. Was it just there?

FRIEDKIN: Yeah, they just happened to be there. When you're making a film on location, you have greater opportunity to seek out and find these things. You're always looking for something that relates to your story. I'm always jotting down things in a notebook that either fit the project I'm working on or something in the future.

CFQ: Do you see a subconscious connection between the car being wrecked and the desecration in the church?

FRIEDKIN: Absolutely, and the little girl's body being desecrated also. In another way, Karras' mother is an old wreck.

CFQ: The feeling you establish is that of a world controlled by the devil long before he appears, as Harry Ringel said in his review.

FRIEDKIN: Yes, but I don't think too much about "the devil," you know. I think it's more a metaphysical force.

CFQ: As with Chris and Regan, one senses a lie in the relationship of Karras with his mother.

FRIEDKIN: There's a lie in every relationship, to a degree. There's tremendous guilt in Karras in the relationship with his mother.

CFQ: I can't see how anyone can misinterpret the ending as a failure for Karras and a victory for the demon. The demon has no reason to destroy itself, but Karras does. Why do you feel people misconstrue this?

FRIEDKIN: Because it's within them to begin with. One thing you cannot exorcise is the deep-seated tenets within people who come to see a movie that deals on such a primitive level with their emotions. Karras' deed is understandable to anyone who has read *A Tale of Two Cities*.

CFQ: When the book came out, I think people had a better grasp of this kind of heroism.

FRIEDKIN: Blatty also tells you how you should think about it. One thing I don't want to do is tell people how they should think about a film.

I'm as interested in people who react negatively to the ending as those who react positively. I was surprised at first to find so many negative reactions.

CFQ: Everyone takes for granted that it's a demon inside Regan. They pass over the indications that it's not a case of possession.

FRIEDKIN: Because they have to. It's more comfortable to say it's "the devil," and therefore dismiss it. A kind of mass hysteria is another valid way of seeing the film. If rationale is necessary for me, then that would be the way I see it, as people in a heightened state, under tremendous strain.

CFQ: One feels that Kinderman knows a lot, but in the last scene we see total bewilderment on his face.

FRIEDKIN: I had shot another scene, the ending of the book, with the same dialogue, but I wanted to leave the audience with their own ending and not deflate the mood that was there. I'm very conscious of making a movie that will enter the minds of those who see it, that will grow in their minds and alter and affect them. One way to do that is to take out all overt meanings and explanations, and that's what I tried to do. Kinderman brings a touch of the "common man," the guy who is going to be relatively unaffected by the action. Occasionally, it's nice to have a character like that. He doesn't solve the case, so critics say Lee J. Cobb is wasted in the picture. Why have the detective if he's not going to be effective? They also serve who play a supporting role in the main event. We don't always find solutions.

CFQ: Like Kinderman, the doctors are also trying to impose order.

FRIEDKIN: Everything they say is actual medical dialogue. For the most part, audiences today reject scientific solutions. We're living in an age where people are unwilling to accept pat, hand-out solutions.

CFQ: The dream Karras has seems to be a combination of guilt-expression and premonition.

FRIEDKIN: I was playing with the notion that it is possible that something that happened to somebody in Iraq, 7000 miles away, turns up in someone else's dream, like the clock and the dogs.

CFQ: You rarely use fades or dissolves in your films, mostly direct cuts. This adds to the film's disturbing quality.

FRIEDKIN: I try not to use fades or dissolves only because I like speed on the screen. The dissolves at the beginning of *THE EXORCIST* are the first I've ever used I think. I have a theory that the audience is way ahead of the filmmaker. I'm looking forward to a kind of filmmaking that breaks with the mechanical overlay of structure that I see in most films.

CFQ: You're very astute in conveying the outward deceptions and inner fears of your characters. Do you work a lot with actors?

FRIEDKIN: Yes, totally, to get those levels. I don't just stage the action. I have long discussions about the internal aspect of the characters, and the emotional barometer from one stage to the next.

CFQ: The hospital scenes are terrifyingly objective in contrast to most of the rest of the film which is subjective. Was this intentional?

FRIEDKIN: Not consciously. It boils down to "what's the best way to shoot this," to give the audience the most information, or the least. It's a specific problem that varies from shot to shot, and scene to scene.

CFQ: Do you see the force inside Regan as a manifestation of her super-ego?

FRIEDKIN: I don't think so, Dale. I think that what happens to her is out of her control, and is imposed. I think it's a disease for which there is no name.

I think a large part of our entertainment today is a result of the national nervous breakdown since the three assassinations and the Vietnam War. I think we are coming out of another kind of seizure with the Nixon administration.

CFQ: There's something about *THE EXORCIST* that its imitators can't match. I think the picture is a classic.

FRIEDKIN: I feel that there's certainly a hell of a lot there that people understand but that has not been mined. It has a lot to say to future generations, if only on a historical basis.



Dick Smith created the makeup seen in *THE EXORCIST*. It is interesting that makeup men are artists/technicians who labor totally behind the scenes perfecting others' faces, yet are themselves, as far as the public is concerned, quite faceless. Smith seems genuinely delighted to talk about his craft, and I sought him out to learn the story behind his work on *THE EXORCIST* and the development of the demon makeup, a visage that has literally haunted millions of movie-goers. Dick is not a self-server and seems not overly concerned with achieving public fame. The Academy Awards had been doled out several days before our talk, and the fact that not only *THE EXORCIST* but the entire area of film makeup and special effects had been snubbed did not seem to bother him. Smith literally founded the first makeup department in television, at NBC during the fifties, and has subsequently distinguished himself in his field with exceptional work in both film and theatre. He is currently serving as the makeup consultant on the film production of Ira Levin's *THE STEPPED WIVES*. His idol is Jack Pierce.

CFQ: At what point were you brought in on the pre-production of *THE EXORCIST*?

SMITH: About five months before we started shooting. I and the special effects chap, Marcel Vercoetere, were both involved at the beginning when they first got Linda Blair and were initially discussing it in New York.

CFQ: What preparations did you undertake in designing the makeup for Linda Blair as the possessed Regan, other than reading the novel which isn't explicit on that account?

SMITH: I dug through all the books I could find on demonology and looked at paintings and drawings of demons and devils. I looked through all of what I had at home—and I have extensive files on ...everything. I dug out every picture I could find of anything that suggested evil and researched them all for ideas to help me. As it turned out, there was very little there in the sources that I found really useful. I must have done at least a dozen different makeups on Linda, and by that I mean really different approaches. Some of them were total disasters, just not workable at all.

Interview conducted by David Bartholomew April 4, 1974 on the set of *GODFATHER II* in New York City. The transcript has been edited slightly.

For instance, I found that adding to her nose even the tiniest amount, to give her a hook nose, looked ludicrous on that little face. It made her look like a midget, or something strange. You just could not put a mature nose on her—it just didn't go. But the point is, we tried many things. Some worked out well from a makeup standpoint. What we wound up with was based simply on my own ideas.

CFQ: Did you sketch your ideas fully, then go to the makeup, or vice-versa, or don't you work that way?

SMITH: The process is this: first of all I get a life mask of the subject, Linda. Then I make several copies, so that I have perhaps six heads of Linda, in plaster. Then I'll get out my clay, my plasteline, and sculpt additions on to them. Obviously, in makeup you can only add three-dimensionally, you can't carve anything away. So with a little girl like Linda with a chubby face the trick is to add to it in such a way that it will look thinner instead of fatter. You sit down, and as you sculpt, say, a nose, you try a hump, you try it wide, long, narrow and so on and you see right before your eyes whether it looks great or dumb. It's a process of trial and error. Working from your own thought, you narrow it down to two or three good possibilities, different approaches, which look like they will work. However, what you sculpt on a life mask may not work well when worn by the performer and photographed on film. For instance, I could give Linda's life mask cheekbones and a strong jaw and even create the illusion of hollow cheeks, and it would all look great on the life mask. But to transform something like that into a foam latex mask and apply it to her face, the minute she smiled, her cheeks would puff out and the whole illusion would be destroyed. It wouldn't appear as part of her own flesh. You have to work out something that when applied to the face moves with every expression and seems part of the person's natural face. Now, working with a little girl's face like Linda's, with the butterball nose she has and the full lips and chubby cheeks, was really rough. She's so whole-some looking.

CFQ: You're constantly doing research on new techniques and materials. Was there anything new that you used on Linda or in *THE EXORCIST* that was innovative?

SMITH: Oh, yes. For instance, we were working for the most part—as I guess everyone knows—on a refrigerated set. It averaged about 10°. At times, Linda had to have her legs exposed, when she levitated, and other times, and since the makeup on her face was very pale and sick, her legs obviously had to match. Pancake makeup, which we normally use for body makeup, just wouldn't hold up. Since it was impossible to keep going in to touch up her makeup with a cold wet sponge under those freezing conditions, I had to develop a plastic makeup. I mixed up a kind of vinyl paint that I could spray on with a paint sprayer. We were able to use it on her legs. It wasn't harmful and could be cleaned off with no real problem and would stay on during filming perfectly and not rub off. We used it on her arms and legs to give the basic color. Then I did another type of makeup to stipple on bruises on top of that. It held up really well and saved Linda a lot of discomfort.

CFQ: Did the cold affect the latex appliances?

SMITH: No, it didn't. They are so thin and so light, I think you could put a foam latex piece in a refrigerator and it wouldn't be affected. I think that the only thing affected by the cold—and I'm not even too sure of this—was the liquid latex formula applied to the hands of Max von Sydow to bring out the lines and wrinkles. Normally his hands are very smooth. It did crack and peel some which may have been due to the cold. That's probably the only thing.

CFQ: Can you define for us the dividing line between what is makeup and what is special effects? The head-turning dummy used in *THE EXORCIST* seems to cut across both areas.

SMITH: Yes, that's true. It is one of those things that you work out—who does what—depending on each case. Basically, we can put it this way: anything that is put on the skin, applied to the skin, usually has to be done by the makeup artist. If it is something like the dummy, where a person's face and body have to be cast, a make-

up artist is better equipped to do that. But as far as the mechanics of the dummy are concerned, putting in the mechanism that moves the eyeballs or turns the head, that was done by special effects. So we do work very closely. I would not do anything without consulting with the special effects guy first to make sure that he then could handle the situation. I would put in the eyeballs and little levers, for instance, in such a way that I knew his devices could be attached, so that the whole thing could function the way we wanted it to. Vercoutere [pronounced ver-coo-tear] did use a marvelous device, it was a radio-controlled thing that they use in flying model airplanes which controls the flight. The unit has a little lever which swings back and forth, so we attached that to the eyeballs to make them move any way we wanted. It was very sensitive. With the transmitter, we could push a lever and make the eyeballs shift a tiny amount or swing wildly. It was very realistic, although I'm not sure how much showed up in the film.

CFQ: You see the dummy for too short a period of time to really notice fine points. The effect of the breath condensation in the cold room was more apparent and effective than anything.

SMITH: That was something that was added later. That was actually the third time we had done this particular scene with the dummy. One of the difficulties was that I had to make the dummy very early before I had any idea how Billy Friedkin was going to use it. I made a dummy from head to toe, to be used in a sitting position on the bed, and that was all I knew at the time.

I molded Linda's body in sections and made a dummy which was basically latex filled with polyurethane foam, a soft foam. I did try to have the joints at the arms and legs bendable so that we could alter the position somewhat. The head and shoulders were made out of a polyester resin because they had to be rigid enough to install the mechanism to make the head pivot smoothly.

But, getting back to the coordination of special effects and makeup, the vomiting was something which I did almost entirely by myself because it involved making flattened tubes that fitted across the cheeks of the actress. They were connected to a tube which went across the mouth from corner to corner—kind of like the bit of a horse's bridle—and it had in it a nozzle. Now, the rear part of this apparatus went back below her ears and was connected to rubber hoses which went down her back. Now that's where the special effects man came in. He had the responsibility of having the pea soup at the proper temperature (laughs) and properly seasoned. We never realized that people would tumble onto the fact that it was pea soup so rapidly. It was picked as a convenient item that seemed to be a color close to bile-like vomit. I think if we had been aware of that response we would have changed the color somewhat. One thing that always happens is that the final print that goes into theatres is often different from what we see in the rushes. In the rushes, the color was simply not that vivid.

CFQ: What would you say was your most difficult task in working on the film?

SMITH: The vomiting, by all means, was the most difficult. You see, the first thing I did was relatively simple. I assumed that they would shoot her from a 3/4 view, so I had a tube going into the off-camera side of her mouth and then covered that by making a "new" corner to her mouth. It was a good "cheat" because you could see the whole mouth and you saw that the vomit was definitely coming out of the mouth. But Billy just insisted that the shot had to be full-face. And I said: "But you can't do it full-face—it's impossible!" He replied: "Well, we'll fix it with lighting or something." I continued to protest: "But you will still see that bulge over there..." But then his own perfectionism just kind of goaded me into striving for something better.

It will sound simple the way I describe it, but actually devising the damned thing was very complicated and not exactly in an area I am technologically familiar with. I used thin sheets of plexiglass and heat formed them. It so happened that I had bought a flameless heat gun, like a high-powered hair dryer, which puts out temperatures of up to 1000°. I had bought this thing for the stomach effect, and it was just a happy convenience that I had it to play around with for it enabled me

to heat-form the thin plastic sheets over a life mask of the actress. Incidentally, this particular life mask was cast with the mouth open and the corners of the lips retracted. When I heat-formed this device, it had the effect not only of carrying the vomit, but the plastic was formed so that the corners of the mouth were retracted and held. The retracting part connected with the device that went into her mouth that held the nozzle. Now all of this had to be made as thin as possible because over it I had to apply a very thin foam latex mask which included the lower lip, and mouth corners to cover this thing where it went into her mouth. The final effect then, with the makeup and all, and a wig on top to cover the harness that held it all on, was a very good duplication of the demon makeup with the mouth open. She couldn't close her mouth at all. This wasn't exactly comfortable to wear, of course. So that was what we finally used, and it was only shown for a split second. How much of a cut is actually used where this device is on, I would assume is only during the actual spasm of vomiting. There is another vomiting scene, where she is lying down, and a thick lava-like flow comes out of her mouth. The same device was used, simply with thicker soup made to flow slower. It fills up the mouth and comes out and that to me in some ways is even more repulsive.

CFQ: How difficult was it for you to work with Linda Blair?

SMITH: She's a most unusual little girl, and I can't imagine anyone else enduring—being as patient—as well as she. She was, of course, a child, and the most patient child in the world is not the same as an adult. The makeup involved approximately two hours or more every morning. We would start around 7 A.M. She was bored by the whole thing—you can't blame her—so we had a little TV set sitting on a shelf on the opposite wall which she could see by looking in the mirror. It got to be a bit dodgy at times, because if I would get in the way of the reflection of the TV set, she would move her head in order to continue seeing what "The Flying Nun" was up to, and it just made it difficult to do the makeup. The only thing that bugged Linda was that she has lovely hair that she is very proud of—she's a very neat young lady who takes good care of herself. One of the things she hated was to have anything in her hair. And, of course, we had to glop it up every day. That really upset her, so finally, instead of putting on what we had been using—a kind of liquid wax that I used on Dustin Hoffman in *MIDNIGHT COWBOY*—which took her three shampoos to get out, we used liquid shampoo, applied right out of the bottle onto her hair. The hair stylist, incidentally, was a great guy, and stylist, named Bill Farley. This was his chore every morning, to glop up Linda's hair. But that was the only thing with which we had difficulty with Linda.

CFQ: Did you find any problems that were insurmountable—things you might have discussed doing but had to discard?

SMITH: The obvious thing is that it was impossible to make Linda look gaunt. You just can't take a chubby-cheeked little girl and make her look gaunt. Owen Roizman, the cinematographer, worked valiantly with his lighting, trying to make her look as gaunt as possible, but there were times, particularly if she were supposed to smile demonically, when those chubby cheeks would puff out. That, of course, was something I was unhappy about, but there was no way out of it.

CFQ: There is speculation that many effects actually shot for the film were left out of the final cut. I believe Friedkin himself often makes mention of it.

SMITH: The only thing I can think of, off-hand, is that originally they were going to have a scene where Linda comes down the stairs in her nightgown, and she comes down kind of upside down, like a spider, or a snake, something loathsome. In the book, this is where the long tongue was supposed to come out. We took it several times, and Billy finally decided he just didn't like the scene, and it was cut. The only time we used this tongue was, I think, in one spot during the exorcism scene. It is a foam rubber tongue which is attached with dental plate adhesive. Of all the effects, it was the easiest to do. When I read the script, I thought: "Oh God, what am I going to use for that?" And it turned out to be so simple that I

have since made up some and given them away to a few close friends for gags. You can stick them on with peanut butter and they are very funny. Another effect which seemed very difficult but for which a simple solution was eventually found was the writing on Regan's stomach. Latex reacts to certain solvents, so we painted the letters with cleaning fluid over her latex-covered stomach.

CFQ: Over the length of the film there seem to be a series of stages to Blair's makeup. Were these definite stages that you designed as a progression of ever more horrific appearance?

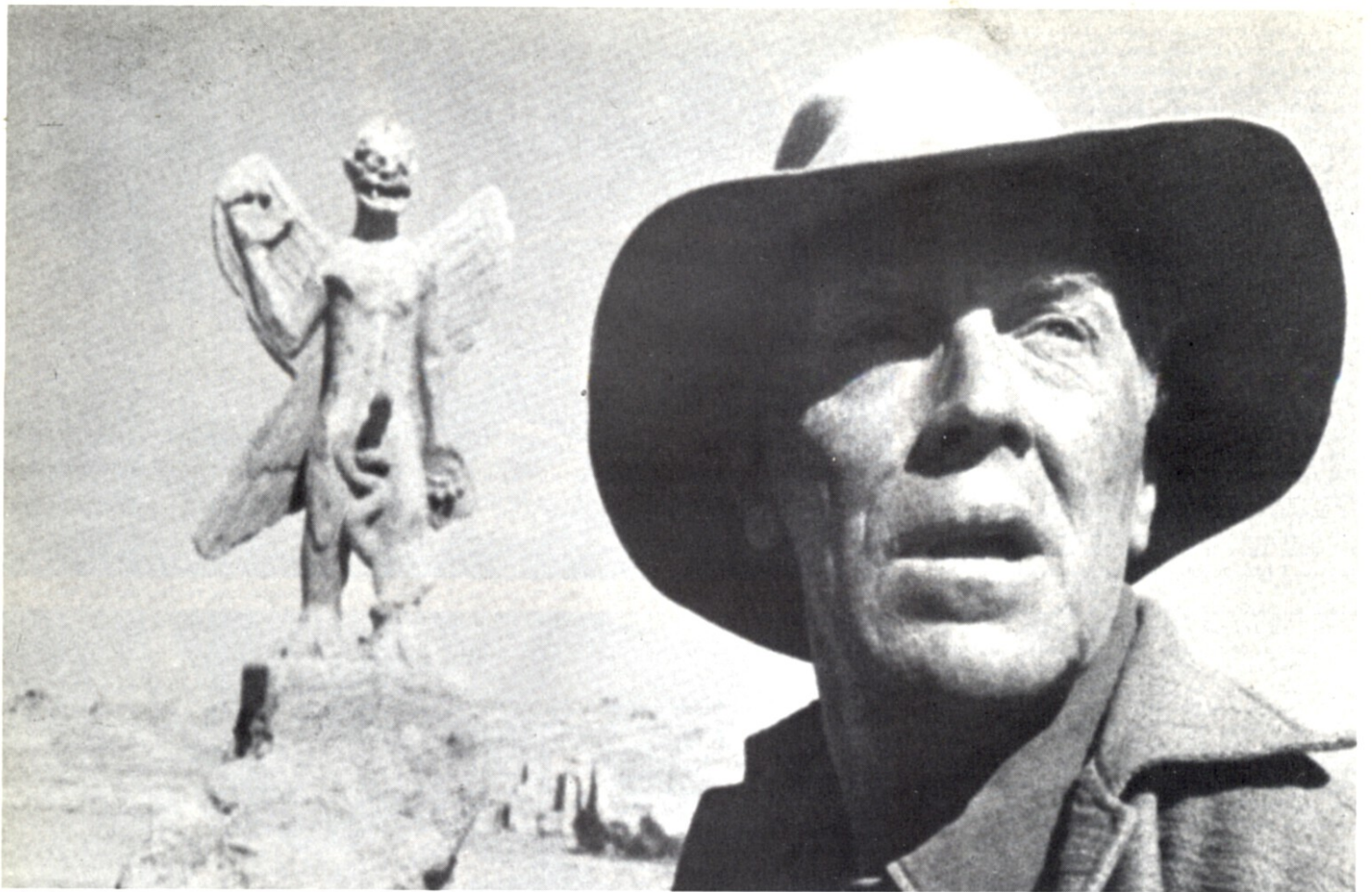
SMITH: Yes...well, I think I have to go back and tell you what actually happened to us. As I said, I started five months or so before we started shooting. Now, we did, at the very beginning, six or eight different makeups and tests. Then a second series of tests which refined it further. So after all these steps we finally arrived at a makeup which was actually much more demonic than what we used in the film. Billy liked it with a few reservations—he wanted me to eliminate several little wrinkles that he thought made her look too old, but generally we agreed. That was it; we had the green light to go ahead, which means that I could correct the molds and go into the business of manufacturing masks. I can only make a couple a day, because the mixture and the baking of the foam latex in these molds takes four to six hours. I had an estimate that the shooting schedule would run X number of weeks. You have to make a mask for every day's use, and some to spare. Of course, when I say "mask," it is not literally in one piece. They are made up in sections that cover certain parts of her brow, mid-face, chin, and so forth. Also, her hands were involved and also her neck. And, we had planned various stages, as you originally asked. There were some tiny pieces to start off with, and a modified version of the demon makeup that was supposed to come into the film in the scene with the psychiatrist. Incidentally, we had several different shades of contact lenses which we made up, with a progression planned for these also.

Anyway, we finally started filming September, 1972 and it wasn't until a couple months later that we came around to doing the earliest manifestation of the demon. This was the scene with the psychiatrist and I used this early version of the demon makeup for it. I wasn't too happy with it because I didn't think she looked demonic enough. I had in my mind the struggle to make her look really fiendish, because her facial expressions were very limited. At the beginning it was hard for her even to frown. But we got to this scene with the mother and the psychiatrist and filmed it, and it was a disaster because Linda really looked so physically different. This sweet little girl had turned into something pretty loathsome, and the dialogue of the adults in the scene just became funny. No one could say those things and yet sit in a room in real life with someone who looked like that. So, we re-scheduled shooting for the scene, and I started doing more makeup testing on Linda. Billy decided that it had to be—his favorite word—"organic," it had to grow from within. We had many consultations, and I brought in all kinds of pictures to show him. It was difficult because at this point, I didn't know what to do. I had used my best ideas—I had done it as well as I could, and now Billy wanted something different.

I'd show him a picture of Claude Rains as the Phantom of the Opera, with half his face burned off. And he'd say: "Yeah, let's do something like that. I like the asymmetrical thing, that's really good." I said: "Well, let's make it look like some sort of disease rather than an obvious burn, some sort of half-distorted face, as if she's gotten sick." Billy wanted to keep everyone guessing as to whether she was truly possessed, or whether



Makeup artist Dick Smith at work. Top: Smith touches-up Linda Blair's makeup on location in a scene that was edited from the final film. Middle: Smith and assistant Bob Laden adjust the hair around Linda Blair's neck for a scene that will be cut in right after the dummy head-turning. Bottom: Linda Blair is shown the life-mask made by Smith and used to design and create the rubber latex makeup appliances which must fit snugly and exactly to the contours of her face.



it was just an aberration of some sort. With my original makeup, there would have been no question. So, we started to try makeup based on our talks. One of the things that came along in this stage was—I'm not sure if it's in the book or the script or what but it certainly was in Billy's head—that there were cuts somewhere on her and that they could be self-inflicted, or they could be demonic manifestations. Whichever, it didn't have to be stated. So I did a thing with a lot of cuts and gashes on one side of her face, and this is finally what we did. I took this cut idea and saved from the earlier makeup the slightest suggestion of a demonic brow because, of course, the eyes were still the focal point, and the contact lenses alone were not enough. In fact, we didn't go to them until the exorcism scenes. The eyes were without eyebrows—it was the kind of hideous skull-like look of the Phantom of the Opera, the Lon Chaney version. It has a stark quality, with the dark around the eyes. It's about as evil as you can get with a little girl, I think. Then with that, we placed cuts very carefully in such a way as to make her face look as lop-sided as possible. Then I did appliances around her mouth which cancelled her own cupid's bow mouth, thickened it somewhat and carried it over to the left side to give a droop to the corner of her mouth. So we had distortion there. Incidentally, we had also planned to use false teeth. We had a number of sets of them made up, also in a progression, and started to use them, but Billy decided he might very well want to use Linda's voice and since she was having a little difficulty speaking with them, we scrapped the teeth. Subsequently, I just painted her teeth with tooth enamel to make them look rotten. Originally, we had also planned to use a wig, but we scrapped that also and used Linda's own hair. The important point is that we got closer and closer to Linda herself, and therefore, it became more and more believable. She was really almost recognizable, at least it was the most moderate kind of transformation that we could do.

I should explain that all the time I was trying to devise this new makeup we were filming other scenes so nothing was held up. But I had to create this new makeup under great pressure, and when we finally did test it satisfactorily and Billy gave me the go-ahead, there was the question of manufacturing the masks again. I couldn't do that and be on the set for my other work at the same time, so I brought in a young friend of mine from California who I think is a genius and will one day beat me at my own trade. His name is Rick Baker. He came and lived at my house—my laboratory is in the basement—and he baked all the pieces for me after I had gotten all the molds made.

Having established the basic look, then came the question of various stages to it. We never tested these and I had to guess at how far I could go in making the various changes and still not exceed Billy's limits of what he would accept. Therefore, I had to be fairly conservative. There are definite stages. The first was simple little fresh cuts. Then we go to the first really ugly stage which involved the appliances; they were kind of swollen, scabby, pus-filled cuts. The third stage was even worse in that they were all thicker and more swollen and more distorting. Then, when we actually got to the exorcism, they were actually less severe. This was Billy's idea. I feel that if we had had more time to do tests, I would have liked to have gone further for the exorcism, to have gotten even more demonic. But under the circumstances, I think it came off OK, the best that we could do considering everything.

CFQ: You have said in another interview that you usually like to teach a subordinate or even the actor himself to do his own makeup. Was this

practice observed on THE EXORCIST?

SMITH: No. I never teach an actor to do his own makeup. I think a makeup artist who encourages an actor to do his own makeup is usually simply being lazy. I do try to spread around information. The most important thing is to have good assistants, because you can't do it all yourself. Now, I was lucky in not only having Rick Baker doing some lab work and also helping on the dummy, but also, on Max von Sydow's makeup, Bob Laden from New York, who is a terrific makeup artist in all ways. He has worked with me quite a number of times before, so after I had worked out von Sydow's makeup, he stepped right in.

Max von Sydow's makeup was actually much more extensive than Linda Blair's. It was a three-hour makeup job and a very difficult one. Aside from Dustin Hoffman's makeup on LITTLE BIG MAN, it was the most complex, most difficult old-age makeup I've ever done. One of the reasons it was so complex was that Friedkin was taking tight closeups without any diffusion on Max. We had foam latex pieces on Max's face and a heavy rubber mask greasepaint kind of makeup, yet it looks very real. That required great technical and artistic perfection. I don't think most people realize just how much makeup is on Max's face. Max is really only about 44 years old. I tried to use the same technique to age Max that I used on Marlon Brando in THE GODFATHER. Marlon had a simple makeup really. He didn't want anything elaborate, so what we worked out was a liquid latex formula that you stipple onto the face with a sponge, then stretch the skin and dry it with a hair dryer. What that does is lengthen the skin and makes it leathery, so that when you let it go, it breaks into a bunch of little wrinkles. If you do it a certain way, you get wrinkles that are really natural. It worked fine on Marlon, who was about the same age as Max, but on Max it just wasn't sufficient. I had to make appliances which virtually covered the entire sides of his face, his upper lip, his chin and the wattle over the Adam's apple, that little area over the neck. The rest—the eyes, the back and sides of the neck—was done with "old-age stipple." Also, his hands were done with a special latex stipple formula.

Incidentally, you had asked me before about innovations, it suddenly occurs to me that one was that I worked out new ageing formulas of the latex materials that gave a much better effect and didn't come off as easily as they usually do. That is the problem with these things, they tend to come loose and peel when a person perspires underneath it. I had a lot of trouble with Marlon's for that reason. I was even able to invent some formulas that stood up in Iraq where temperatures were up to 115° in the shade. They were virtually waterproof. On that subject I'll add one more thing—almost every color and material used was something that I had to mix up from various colors and materials to make it suitable for what we were doing. So I now have boxes and boxes of jars of all these odd things. Black and blue colors, I have dozens of them (laughter)...

CFQ: Some people have called THE EXORCIST a jinxed film, linking the subject matter to certain incidents during filming, such as the death of Jack MacGowran, the delays, the fire on the set, etc. Do you feel this at all?

SMITH: No, no, I don't think so. On every film there are bad things that happen. The first film I ever worked on I lost a finger. On LITTLE BIG MAN, one of the actors died right in the middle of shooting and had to be replaced by a double. I've known people to break legs, lose eyes, do all kinds of things while working on films.

CFQ: Of course, but this has been blown all out of proportion on this film.

SMITH: Oh, it's incredible. It makes good copy. There are a lot of funny stories about the film. I think the loss of the Pazuzu statue, which turned up in Hong Kong, is amusing. The big statue which is shown in Iraq was made here in New York and shipped over along with a lot of other stuff via air freight. It was supposed to be taken off at Bagdad Airport and trucked up to our location. The truck arrived with everything else, but no statue. I mean, how can you lose a 6-foot statue? It seemed like the demon had taken off by himself—it was really great! And, of course, how

odd that they found it in Hong Kong. There was a logical explanation. It had been packed in the wrong compartment of the cargo plane because there wasn't room in the correct one. By the plane's route, it wound up in Hong Kong, and when they got there and still had a package, they took it off there.

One other story that I like also involved the statue. When they finally got it in position for shooting, Billy Friedkin wanted hawks to fly overhead. They brought hawks down from England at great expense, but they wouldn't fly in the hot weather, so that plan was abandoned. But they didn't give up. The production manager went to a little native village and got a couple of dead lambs and stuck them up by the statue on the mountain hoping to draw vultures, or something. No vultures came, but what happened was that the villagers began talking about this strange old man from America who had come to Hatra—the name of the ancient city there—brought his own statue and was making animal sacrifices to his own God!

CFQ: Friedkin has indicated that everyone working on the film became very tightly-knit—he used the term "spiritual community" in his interview at the AFI. Did you feel any of this?

SMITH: Most film crews, at least ones that I've worked on, are composed of a lot of really hard-working people. There's a certain solidarity among most members of crews. They are very professional people, and they all pull together. There's always a couple of people who don't, but that's just the way it is. On THE EXORCIST there was a particularly good crew, certainly. They were all top people, but I hesitate to say there was any "spiritual" (laughs) togetherness here. We had a very challenging job, and we all worked at it. I look back on it fondly because I had more time on it to experiment and develop things than I've ever had on any other film, and that's always marvelous. I would love to do something like that again, to work with Friedkin again. When it was all over, I would say that it was kind of like a trial by fire, and the relationships that were formed had certainly been tested by some of the most difficult and aggravating conditions. There were a couple of times where the conditions were such that I wanted to quit and did virtually tender my resignation.

CFQ: Was this frustration with the work?

SMITH: I don't really want to get into it. Let's just say that there were a couple of phases of the operation which were exceedingly trying. But we did get over them. Not everything went smoothly, by any means. We had some very rough spots, but we all weathered them and it came out well. It was finally very gratifying, and relationships that may have been rocky at one point were good at the end.

CFQ: You mentioned having seen THE EXORCIST only once. What was your opinion of it?

SMITH: I saw it at a private screening just before its release. I thought it was marvelous. I had seen some of it when Billy was editing it, while I was working on GODFATHER II in California. I'd run over and visit him sometimes. I remember when I saw the masturbation scene. They finally finished putting it together and they ran the whole scene, which only runs a minute or so. And even though I knew everything that was in it, I sat there and the chills went up and down my spine. I remember thinking at the time, "This is really going to do it. This is really going to be fantastic."

CFQ: Do you prefer doing horror films rather than, say, what you're doing now on GODFATHER II?

SMITH: No. GODFATHER II has nothing really extensive of any sort. It's a lot of little things. The only thing at all complicated was a throat-cut I had to do in which the throat continues to bleed, to spurt blood, and that was tricky. The film is entirely different from THE EXORCIST because there was no preparation involved for me. We're winging it as we go along. Whatever effect is needed I have to try to cook something up on the job. It's not as convenient a way to work.

CFQ: Some people—particularly Catholics—feel THE EXORCIST is obscene. Do you agree?

SMITH: No. I don't think it is obscene. It is a matter of personal opinion I guess.

CFQ

Top: Max von Sydow as Father Merrin. Makeup used on von Sydow was actually more extensive than that used on Linda Blair. Smith calls von Sydow's makeup "the most complex, most difficult old-age makeup I've ever done." Bottom: Regan cries out for help in the only way she can as the feeble letters "help me" rise up visibly on the skin of her emaciated stomach. In ignoring Smith's creative makeup design on THE EXORCIST the Motion Picture Academy clearly showed their prejudice against the film.

When man entered the atomic age he opened a door into a new world. What he may eventually find in that new world no one can predict.



Scenes from THEM!, a Warner Bros picture released in 1954. Top: Dr. Patricia Medford (Joan Weldon) flees before an oncoming giant ant in the Mohave desert. Bottom: James Whitmore, Joan Weldon and James Arness enter the ant nest to destroy the queen and her eggs.



RETROSPECT

THEM!

It's power lies in its ability to deliver a subtle, but crucial, message on the hazards of the nuclear age.

THEM! A Warner Bros Picture. 1954. 94 minutes. In Black & White. Produced by David Weisbart. Directed by Gordon Douglas. Screenplay by Ted Sherdeman. Adaptation by Russell Hughes. Story by George Worthing Yates. Photography by Sid Hickox, A.S.C. Art director, Stanley Fleischer. Film editor, Thomas Reilly, A.C.E. Sound by Francis J. Scheid. Music by Bronislau Kaper. Orchestrations by Robert Franklyn. Musical direction, Ray Heindorf. Set decoration by G. W. Bernstein. Wardrobe, Moss Mabry. Powder and effects by Ralph Ayres. Prop construction, Dick Smith. Makeup, Gordon Bau. Assistant director, Russ Sanders.

Sgt. Ben Peterson James Whitmore
Dr. Harold Medford Edmund Gwenn
Dr. Patricia Medford Joan Weldon
Robert Graham James Arness
Brig. Gen. O'Brien Onslow Stevens
Major Kibbee Sean McClory
Ed Blackburn Chris Drake
Little Girl Sandy Descher
Mrs. Lodge Mary Ann Hokanson
Capt. of Troopers Don Shelton
Crotty Fess Parker
Jensen Olin Howlin
Dixon Frederick J. Foote
Interne Bill Schallert
Sergeant Leonard Nimoy
Watchman Dubb Taylor

by Steve Rubin

Steve Rubin is a freelance writer and film researcher based in Los Angeles, where he attended UCLA, receiving a Bachelor's degree in History. Rubin is currently completing work on a book about the *Combat Films of World War II*. He likes science fiction films, particularly those he remembers seeing during the 1950s when he was growing up. His favorite directors are John Sturges, Robert Wise, and Jack Arnold.

THEM! was one of the most successful films of the 1950s, combining a classic detective story with fantasy science fiction. Its power lies in its ability to deliver a subtle, but crucial, message on the hazards of the nuclear age, while at the same time, unraveling a violent terrifying tale, as powerful a scenario for the fifties as Alfred Hitchcock's *THE BIRDS* would be a decade later. Dr. Medford's closing comment, in this 1954 film, was not the typical "voice of doom," antagonizing those who continued to build bigger and bigger bombs. His short comment, instead, says a great deal, albeit subtly, about the then contemporary feeling of fear and wonder about the dawning of a new scientific age. Few people in 1954 resented the new destiny evident in the race for nuclear power. Phrases like "nuclear confrontation" and "push button warfare" were still a few years off and the atom was considered, more, a powerful new energy tool, than a deadly weapon that could eventually depopulate the earth. This attitude is, of course, not obsolete since after twenty years there is still an obsession with the spectrum of atomic energy and atomic power plant building while an aura of apathy surrounds the question of nuclear disarmament.

Ted Sherdeman, a staff producer at Warner Bros, thought differently. Realizing that few people knew what the bomb could actually do, Sherdeman along with director Gordon Douglas, at that time a thirty-year veteran of mostly comedy films, fostered a film project that could give an audience a bizarre peek into the reality of the atomic age. Today, Sherdeman can still recall vividly the moment he first heard the news about the atom-bombing of Hiroshima. "I was a Lt. Colonel then," he told me, "and when I heard the news I just went over to the curb and started to throw up. I'll never forget that moment." He also remembers, as we speak in his comfortable California home, about the development of **THEM!** at Warner Bros, about how the project seemed to express an intangible, undefinable mistrust of the atom bomb that he wanted to get across to the public, and about how production of the film was nearly cancelled. Separately, I sought out director Gordon Douglas who began to remember more and more about the film as we talked. Since **THEM!**, Douglas had directed over thirty features in the intervening years and, as he quipped, "I've probably gotten at least 20 traffic tickets." Despite the passage of over twenty years since the film was made, as I talked with these two veteran Hollywood craftsmen, the story behind the production of **THEM!** came back in fresh detail. It provides a fascinating look behind the scenes of the studio system that produced most of the genre films during the 1950s, evidencing the stupidity, short-sightedness and lack of creativity we always suspected must be there.

THEM! began as an original story written by George Worthing Yates, submitted to Warner Bros as the treatment for a proposed screenplay. As was the custom, Findlay McDermid, the story editor at the studio, circulated the story among the various producers responsible for developing the large number of feature films released each year. Among them was Ted Sherdeman, a new producer on the lot, who was excited by the Yates story, an account in the form of a diary of the invasion of New York City by giant ants which nest among the city's subway system. Says Sherdeman: "The idea appealed to me very much because, aside from man, ants are the only creatures in the world who plan and wage war, and nobody trusted the atomic bomb at that time." At

Sherdeman's request, McDermid bought the story and commissioned Yates to prepare a screenplay in ten weeks, at \$2500 per week. **THEM!** was Yates' first science fiction screenplay—typed by the financial success of **THEM!** he would go on to work on eight others, among them, two for Ray Harryhausen films (*IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA* and *EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS*) and one for George Pal (*CONQUEST OF SPACE*)—and it quickly became apparent that he was unable to resist the easy temptation to over-write beyond the feasibility of production. The developing screenplay was totally unlike his tightly constructed, suspenseful little story. "It had some ants," said Sherdeman laughingly, "but it was one of those things which would have cost 42 million dollars to produce—a totally worthless project." After five weeks of not getting what he wanted, Sherdeman went to McDermid and Walter McCuhan, Jack L. Warner's right-hand man, and tried to get them to pay-off Yates, rather than have him waste five more weeks. McDermid agreed that the screenplay was ridiculous, but Jack L. Warner insisted that Yates work out the full ten weeks contracted for. "Warner had this idea," said Sherdeman, "that it didn't matter that you paid five cents for something as long as you got a nickel's worth back."

Sherdeman worked on other projects while Yates finished the screenplay, only to have it dumped in the nearest wastebasket. Still intrigued by the original short story and determined to produce it, Sherdeman returned to story editor Findlay McDermid for help, and he suggested that contract writer Russell Hughes might be able to make something of it. Sherdeman knew Hughes very well, and as the writer was currently unemployed, McDermid assigned him to develop a screenplay for **THEM!**. Hughes shared Sherdeman's enthusiasm for the project, as well as his uneasiness about the atomic bomb. Hughes developed the basic idea of finding the little girl lost in the desert and doing the first half of the film as a detective story. The second half would become a search for the queen ants escaping from the original nest, with the last queen trapped in an amusement park at the end of the picture. Sherdeman and Hughes envisioned filming the finale down at Santa Monica pier. At last the project seemed to be taking shape, and Sherdeman told Hughes to forget about doing a treatment and get started on the screenplay right away. Arch Oboler had just released *BWANA DEVIL* in 3-D and every studio in Hollywood began to ready their own 3-D productions to cash-in on its tremendous financial success. Sherdeman envisioned **THEM!** as Warner Bros' first entry in the 3-D sweepstakes, but Russell Hughes, after completing only about twenty pages of script, died quietly and unexpectedly one evening while sitting in his favorite chair watching the television.

Undaunted, Sherdeman completed the script himself. He had discussed the concept of the film at great length with Hughes and had always had a good idea of what he wanted all along. While later films of the genre would stress mass panic amid conquering hordes, Sherdeman's scenario contrasted a strange surface normality against a pervasive "judgement day" atmosphere. But Sherdeman began to suspect that, with the screenplay done, his problems were only just beginning. One day while outside with Steve Trilling, the assistant to Jack L. Warner at the studio, the two of them came upon this trail of ants on the sidewalk. "You mean you want to make a film about those things?" asked Trilling. "Yes," replied Sherde-



On location in the Mohave desert, the camera of cinematographer Sid Hickox dollies in on lost little Sandy Descher, wandering about aimlessly and in shock, clutching tightly to her baby doll. Just two days before the unit was set to leave for the location to begin filming, the budget of **THEM!** was slashed by the front office at Warner Bros and director Gordon Douglas was told that he would have to shoot the film in black and white instead of color.

man. "For Christ's sake!" said Trilling as he turned away and walked inside. Sherdeman knew then that he had to develop some angle to sell the idea of **THEM!** to Warner Bros management. In researching the screenplay he had gone out to UCLA to meet with a couple of young Entomologists who had put together some remarkable 16mm film of insect life in the desert. He invited them down to Warner Bros and set up a screening of their film for Trilling and Jack L. Warner in a projection room on the lot. Sherdeman hoped the film, quite similar to the documentary footage which Dr. Medford uses in **THEM!** to explain the ferocity of antkind, would be enough to interest them in the project. "Warner finally came in," told Sherdeman, "and we started the film. He saw about two minutes of it, got up and said, 'Hell, who needs this!' turned, and walked out the door. Trilling followed him." Sherdeman apologized to the scientists, and put them in touch with a friend he knew at Walt Disney Productions. Their film eventually became **THE LIVING DESERT**. And Sherdeman went back to the drawing board.

Sherdeman took some pictures of harvester ants over to Larry Meiggs in the Warner Bros art department. Meiggs carved a three-foot ant out of wood, with movable head, antennae and mandibles. They painted it black and constructed a beautiful case for it complete with flocked interior. Sherdeman set the case down on Steve Trilling's desk one morning and said: "This is what **THEM!** is all about." When he opened the case Trilling was, at last, impressed. He was so impressed, in fact, that he insisted they film a test with the ant that very morning. Sherdeman attempted to protest that the ant was not an articulated model and therefore wasn't suitable for filming, but Trilling insisted on making a test to show Warner. They marched over to a sound stage, had a property man set up a little background, and Meiggs' impressive but quite stationary ant model was photographed. Trilling showed the test footage to Jack L. Warner and the next thing Sherdeman knew **THEM!** was up for sale!

20th Century-Fox made an offer to purchase the screenplay from Warner Bros. Sherdeman was all set to go to work for Alfred Hitchcock on **DIAL M FOR MURDER** which was gearing up for production at the studio. One day, while in the office of Walter McCuhan, the executive startled him by saying: "You know, I read **THEM!** last night and it's pretty good. It's pretty commercial and I think we can do something with it." Sherdeman was shocked. Jack L. Warner never failed to complain at their weekly production meetings just how bad the motion picture business had become. Sherdeman told McCuhan: "You know, if you buy things you don't even know you're buying, and you sell things you don't even know you're selling, then this studio is in even bigger trouble than J. L. Warner thinks it is!" When Warner Bros had received the call from Fox to place an offer on the screenplay, McCuhan decided he had better find out what another studio was willing to lay out hard, cold cash for. He decided that it was a good story after all, and that Warner Bros had better hold onto it. Production on the film was reactivated immediately and Gordon Douglas was brought in as director. Douglas had started work in silent films for Hal Roach, had worked with greats like Laurel and Hardy, and was an acknowledged comedy expert. After reading the screenplay he remarked to Sherdeman that he felt the property was a perfect vehicle for Martin and Lewis. Says Sherdeman: "I went out and got awfully drunk and then I started casting."

Casting was about as far as Sherdeman would ever get on the picture. He chose actor Edmund Gwenn for the role of Professor Medford and wound up in a heated argument with the head of

the studio, Jack L. Warner. Warner didn't want Gwenn because he felt the actor was too old for the part. Sherdeman stood firm, and one day in the executive dining room, Warner walked over to David Weisbart and told him to take over the production of *THEM!* In an uncomfortable situation, Sherdeman told Weisbart that the only commitment he had made thus far was the deal with Gwenn and the new producer upheld his decision. The choice was a good one. Gwenn had made a career out of playing lovable old eccentrics in films like *MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET* and *MR. 880*, and was perfect for the role of Dr. Medford. James Whitmore was a Spencer Tracy look-alike doing bit parts at MGM, and was grabbed for the role of Sgt. Peterson on that potential. Joan Weldon was spotted at a party by William Orr, the son-in-law to Jack L. Warner, who immediately put her under contract. She was a singer and *THEM!* was her sixth picture. Douglas brought in Fess Parker as Crotty, a flyer who has seen the winged ants and in a comic bit is thrown in the booby hatch. James Arness rounded out the cast as FBI agent Robert Graham.

THEM! was budgeted for color photography and location filming. Douglas spent most of the pre-production phase in aiding in the design of the giant ants and making final revisions in the script with Sherdeman. The ending in the amusement park, conceived by Russell Hughes, had to be changed when it was found to be too expensive a proposition to rent-out the entire facilities at Santa Monica pier for a day. A finale in the storm drains beneath Los Angeles was chosen instead, adding greatly to the film's eeriness and sense of claustrophobic horror. It was at this stage that Douglas and Sherdeman inserted many of the film's comic vignettes, with Douglas drawing upon his obvious experience in the genre. Like James Whale, Douglas realized and appreciated the importance of humor as an effective counterpoint to horror and suspense. He had brought Fess Parker to the picture with precisely that idea in mind. As Crotty, a patient at a mental institution in Brownsville, Texas, Fess Parker raves about visions of giant ants and flying saucers. Running around in loose-fitting pajamas, Parker is hilarious as the innocent victim of a crisis whose secret no one will reveal. "They were running around like regular kamikazes," he raves, "like to scare me right out of my pants!" When the scientists look as if they believe him, Crotty breathes a sigh of relief and confesses that he had begun to wonder himself if he was crazy. As they leave, Arness turns to the doctor and orders him to keep Crotty confined until further notice. "We'll tell you when he's well again," he says with a sense of dry, cynical humor that adds immeasurably to the effectiveness of the film. Says Douglas: "You'll find that in the toughest situations, comedy pops in. You can use it wherever you have the chance, as long as it doesn't destroy the dramatics. I've always had a feeling that if you don't give the audience something to laugh at once in a while, they're going to find something, maybe the wrong thing."

Douglas worked with Dick Smith* at the studio in constructing the giant ants and working out their appearance and pigmentation for the color cameras. Two main ants were constructed, one fully, the other minus the hindquarters and mounted on a boom for mobility. Behind this, a whole crew, mounted on a dolly, manipulated the various knobs and levers that made the mechani-

*Not the famed makeup artist of the same name.

Top: Sgt. Ben Peterson (James Whitmore) attempts to question the little girl (Sandy Descher) to learn what has happened. It is her terrified screams of "Them! Them! Them!" from which the picture takes its title. Middle: FBI Agent Robert Graham (James Arness) and Dr. Patricia Medford (Joan Weldon) prepare to descend into the ant chamber to search out the queen and her eggs. Bottom: "Look at the size of it," exclaims Dr. Harold Medford (Edmund Gwenn) to James Whitmore, pointing to a detached mandible of one of the giant ants. In an argument over the casting of Gwenn, studio head Jack L. Warner relieved screenwriter Ted Sherdeman of his production duties on *THEM!*





Top: At the film's conclusion set within the storm drains beneath the city of Los Angeles, star James Whitmore is trapped and crushed by a giant ant as he lifts two children to safety. Middle: The location of the ant nest is found by a helicopter search as the ants leave to forage for food. Two main ants were constructed for the film, one fully, the other minus the hindquarters and mounted on a boom for mobility. THEM! represents one of the few successful uses of full-scale mechanical models. Bottom: James Whitmore, James Arness and Joan Weldon reach the queen's chamber, covered with the bodies of dead ants and ant larvae, only to discover that young queens have hatched and flown the nest.



cal model come alive. Douglas laughed: "You would have a shot where an ant comes into the picture and if you glanced back behind the creature you would see about 20 guys, all sweating like hell!" A number of "extra" ants were also constructed for scenes where large numbers of the creatures appeared, but where mobility was not essential. These ant models were equipped only with heads and antennae that would be activated by the force from the wind-machines used to whip up the sand storms required on the desert locations. For the color of the ants, Douglas settled on a purplish shade of green. The special effects people came up with a novel idea to make the eyes of the ants seem alive: they were rigged to be injected with a bubbling soapy mixture of reds and blues that constantly changed and coruscated. Unfortunately, much of this novel effect was lost in the final film for, two days before the unit was set to go on location in the Mohave desert to begin filming, the budget of THEM! was slashed by the front office and Douglas was told that he would have to shoot the film in black and white. "Our budget ended up considerably under a million dollars," he said. "We shot a quick schedule and had a small, inexpensive cast."

By the spring of 1954, THEM! had finally reached the screen, perhaps not as the elaborate color and 3-D production originally envisioned, but basically the film Sherdeman and Douglas had intended. "I really wanted to say more than I did," admitted Sherdeman, "but your script has to be practical, especially in a science fiction film like THEM!" He recalls clearly, with a sense of humor and irony, the film's preview held at the Huntington Theatre in Huntington Park, California. After the screening was over, Jack L. Warner would go up to the theatre manager's office to hold court as usual. He gathered the production people all together and announced: "Anyone who wants to make any more ant pictures will go to Republic!" and with that he walked out. THEM! turned out to be the highest grossing picture that Warner Bros released that year, and one that was to inspire an entire sub-genre of horror films.

THEM!, along with DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, was really one of the first films to whimper against the atomic bomb, over eight years before the Cuban missile crisis brought the world to the brink of "judgement day." Yet, like Don Siegel's INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS, THEM! is more of a study in human reaction than glaring science fiction. Although KING KONG explored the horrors of "beast vs. humanity," it was not until the atom bomb was dropped that films like THEM! could be treated philosophically, and not laughed off as entertaining, yet silly, fairy tales. In creating the film version of Yates' story, Sherdeman was not overly concerned with the public's acceptance of giant ants. He realized that these mutants, as in the case of KING KONG, would frighten an audience. But Sherdeman, who is still fighting the perils of the atomic age through his novel Road Ends, wanted more, a sense of violent horror based on a semblance of fact. Granted a distinct advantage in that few laymen understood the real dangers of atomic radiation, Sherdeman was able to lend more than just an aura of plausibility to his terrifying tale. Gordon Douglas and a veteran crew welded the film expertly and through their finesse created a film that became a classic tale of science fiction rather than a crass example of exploitation, the fate of so many of its imitators.



OCFQO



Director Gordon Douglas goes over the script with his actors during a story conference while shooting on location in the Mohave desert. From left to right: James Whitmore, Edmund Gwenn, Joan Weldon, Douglas, and James Arness. Douglas focused his attention on the human reactions of his characters to make the science fiction premise of **THEM!** more believable.



Gordon Douglas has to shout last minute instructions to Joan Weldon to be heard over the roar of the unit's powerful wind machines. Douglas had started in silent films with Hal Roach, had worked with greats like Laurel and Hardy and was an acknowledged expert at film comedy at the time he accepted the assignment to direct **THEM!**

FILM REVIEWS

THE TERMINAL MAN

...a personal statement about a colorless society...

THE TERMINAL MAN A Warner Bros Release. 6/74. 107 minutes. In Technicolor. Produced, written and directed by Mike Hodges. Based on the novel by Michael Crichton. Director of photography, Richard H. Kline, A.S.C. Art director, Fred Harpman. Edited by Robert Wolfe, A.C.E. Sound by William Randall. Sound editor, Nicholas Stevenson. Set decorator, Marvin March. Associate producer, Michael Dryhurst. Music, Goldberg Variations No. 25 by J. S. Bach. Played by Glenn Gould, Courtesy of Columbia Records. 1st assistant director, Dick Moder. Unit production manager, Bruce Fowler, Jr. Costume design, Nino Novaresse.

Harry Benson George Segal
Dr. Janet Ross Joan Hackett
Dr. John Ellis Richard A. Dysart
Angela Black Jill Clayburgh
Dr. Arthur McPherson Donald Moffat
Gerhard Matt Clark
Dr. Robert Morris Michael C. Gwynne
Det. Capt. Anders Normann Burton
Dr. Ezra Manon William Hansen
Ralph Friedman James Sikking
The Priest Ian Wolfe
Guards Gene Borkan and Burke Byrnes

THE TERMINAL MAN is about a psychotic (Segal) with a fear of machines. He has a computer implanted in his brain to control his violent seizures. The idea backfires and Segal goes on a murderous spree triggered by the computer. As directed by Michael Hodges, this story becomes the basis for a personal statement about a colorless society, a paranoid society, a society in which our references are clinical.

The colorless society is most pointedly explored. Although the film is shot in color, it may represent the most overt use of black and white in a commercial color film. Walls, clothes, sky, floors, machines are either black or white. All clothes worn by all characters are black or white. A girl, who is about to be murdered, paints her white nails black. She watches **THEM!** on a black and white television. The physicians wear only hospital whites and for evening dress, black and white tuxedos. Even the psychiatrist, Joan Hackett, when off duty wears black and white gowns and white jewelry. The hospital, her home and the home of a surgeon are sterile, modern and black and white. Color is added to this society only as a foreboding and a disruption, a blood red rose in the hands of the sleeping terminal man, a rose pointing to his deathlike sleep and doom. Throughout the film, one may try to make sense of the choices of black and white, to sort out character by color. Since the choice of color scheme doesn't appear to be "real" in the film, one is forced to question what it "really" means.

The references to paranoia are as overt as those to color in the film. The film opens with an eye staring at us out of one corner of the black screen. The eye makes the audience feel self-conscious. It is looking at us from in hiding, observing. A voice, presumably that of the person who owns that eye, speaks about the madman he is looking at. The voice and the eye reappear several times in the film. At first we think he is talking about Segal, the terminal man. By the end of the film we find, as we may have suspected, that he is talking about us. Finally, the voice announces, "You're next," an apparent reference to

the somber climax of Don Siegel's **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS**, a warning that we can become the victims of the colorless society run by cold, machine-like scientists.

For all of its self-consciousness and "art," from the dwelling on the mixing of blood and water from a water bed and victim as they run into fissures in a tile floor to the ironic death of the terminal man in a grave, the film is not particularly intellectual. Indeed, **THE TERMINAL MAN** deals with many of the conventions of horror and science fiction. For example, the medical community fouls up, creates a monster as gross as Frankenstein's. The scientists prove to be the smug, self-serving arrogant asses they have been from **METROPOLIS** to **THE EXORCIST**. Benson, the terminal man, is a classical split personality, a wolfman, a Jekyll and Hyde, a possessed creature. The difference is that it is not an animal unleashed by science, but a machine, a machine in the cold image of the scientist himself, a machine gone wild. As with other science fiction and horror works, the tormented creature turns to the hopes which society has offered him. He turns to the woman who loves him and destroys her. He turns to a priest and kills him. He turns to his psychiatrist, and is destroyed himself.

It is interesting to wonder how Crichton—who wrote the book, wrote and directed **WESTWORLD**, and wrote **THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN**—would have directed **THE TERMINAL MAN**. Crichton, a physician, is concerned with machines and the possibility of man becoming a machine. His novels and film scripts are infested with robots or people who behave like cold machines and are aware of it. Although Hodges' film refers to Benson's fear of becoming a machine, and there is a scene in which he attacks the computer devices he has worked on, Hodges is less interested in this modern fear than in the black and white urban coldness and control of science in general and medical science in particular. It is fairly safe to assume that as writer-director, Crichton would have been more direct and far less self-conscious. Though **WESTWORLD** concerns itself with themes as broad as those of **THE TERMINAL MAN**, they are never discussed as issues or pointed out through references to other works, openly questioned as with Hodges' reappearing eye, or overtly reflected upon as in the use of black and white. Crichton's novel ends in a confrontation between the psychiatrist and the patient in a computer room. She kills him and faces the horror of what she has helped to create. One assumes that, as in the novel, Crichton would have shown more sympathy for the physicians, have seen their situation as a dilemma, a pull between science and human frailty and limitation. For Hodges, the scientists and science are the villains, for Crichton, the scientist and patient alike are the victims.

Stuart M. Kaminsky

Harry Benson (George Segal) lies on the operating table as a team of scientists attempt to implant an electrical computer in his brain that will be able to control the fits of psychomotor epilepsy that have turned him into a dangerous, pathological murderer. A scene from **THE TERMINAL MAN**, director Mike Hodges' personal statement on our colorless society, currently in release from Warner Bros.



THE PARALLAX VIEW

...a haunting existentialist nightmare of indefinable forces...

THE PARALLAX VIEW A Paramount Pictures Release. 6/74. In Technicolor. 102 minutes. Executive producer, Gabriel Katzka. Produced and directed by Alan J. Pakula. Screenplay by David Giler, Lorenzo Semple, Jr. based on the novel by Loren Singer. Director of photography, Gordon Willis. Edited by John W. Wheeler. Music by Michael Small. Production design, George Jenkins. Set decoration, Reg Allen.

Joseph Frady Warren Beatty
Editor Rintels Hume Cronyn
Austin Tucker William Daniels
Lee Carter Paula Prentiss
Sheriff Kelly Thordsen
Deputy Earl Hindman
Former FBI Agent Kenneth Mars
Parallax Representative Walter McGinn
Senator Hammond Jim Davis

The political assassination conspiracy theme seems more prevalent now than in the past, since the three tragedies that have occurred in the past decade. Lewis Allen (the director of *THE UNINVITED*) made a little sleeper in 1954 called *SUDDENLY*, with Frank Sinatra as a hired killer, that was something of a forerunner in the genre. The Presidential assassination theme was given greater impact eight years later in John Frankenheimer's masterpiece, *THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE*, also starring Sinatra. It was a breathlessly, powerfully captivating and suspenseful fantasy of a war hero, brainwashed to commit the ultimate murder. It remains one of the cornerstone films of *cinéfantastique*. After a considerable lull came David Miller's cold and taut mixture of documentary and fiction, *EXECUTIVE ACTION*, and now Alan J. Pakula's *THE PARALLAX VIEW*.

Pakula's film portrays a bizarre Wellesian universe in which the protagonist, Joe Frady (Warren Beatty), is caught-up into playing out a game of destiny that is violent, unscrupulous, and relentlessly ironic. He joins an organization of hired killers in order to expose them in print, and winds up being victimized himself. Like the characters of Welles (Hank Quinlan in *TOUCH OF EVIL*, Macbeth, Othello, Mr. Arkadin), Frady is trapped in a web of fate that he must see through to its inevitable finish. He is powerless and irresponsible in his search for the truth and, somewhat like Sam Fuller's newspaperman in *SHOCK CORRIDOR*, it leads to tragedy.

In the Wellesian power of Pakula's limbo imagery, there is also a Hitchcock influence in his use of editing and long takes for cleverly calculated surprise and suspense touches. While Pakula's technique has assimilated the work of these artists, it is never to the point of obfuscating his own patiently and potently bleak point-of-view. Huge expanses of space and glass dwarf characters into cold impersonal objects, manipulated by some invisible force that they are unable to control let alone acknowledge.

THE PARALLAX VIEW is a superb fantastic-thriller and something of a minor masterpiece. From the naturalistic intensity of Beatty's performance (not to forget Paula Prentiss' superb, poignant, and brief portrait of a woman fearing death), to the haunting existentialist nightmare of indefinable forces, it is indelible fantasy. The brilliant indoctrination montage, which Frady must undergo to join the organization, deliberately crossing pictures of family, poverty, prosperity, war, happiness, country, love, and hate, is perhaps the film's ultimate example of fantasy as effective and affecting emotional manipulation. It is, like the trip in 2001, a direct participation experience that the protagonist goes through as well as the audience. It is a classic sequence in this, Pakula's only vindication as a filmmaker to date.

Dale Winogura



Captain Kronos (Horst Janson) holds his sword across his eyes to protect himself from Wanda Ventham's hypnotic stare of death in *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER*, currently in release from Paramount Pictures. The Hammer film is directed with dash by Brian Clemens and produced by Albert Fennell, the team who created television's popular series *THE AVENGERS*.

CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER

...establishes Hammer once more as one of the genre's most valued and respected studios.

CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER A Paramount Pictures Release. 6/74. In Color. 91 minutes. Written and directed by Brian Clemens. Produced by Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens. Production supervisor, Roy Skeggs. Music by Laurie Johnson. Edited by James Needs. Director of photography, Ian Wilson.

Kronos Horst Janson
Dr. Marcus John Carson
Paul Durward Shane Briant
Carla Caroline Munro
Grost John Cater
Sara Durward Lois Diane
Kerro Ian Hendry

It is difficult not to love *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* after exposure to its depressingly undistinguished co-feature, Terence Fisher's *FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL*. But even after a separate screening on its own the fact remains, the film is one of Hammer Films' all-time greats in the horror genre.

Set in the early nineteenth century, the film opens as Captain Kronos and the hunchbacked Professor Grost ride through a beautiful pastoral countryside. Hammer's new hero is a handsome young man with an aloof presence and mysterious past. During a brief moment of explanation, we learn that he is "late of the Imperial Guard" when the unpolished Caroline Munro character suggests that he looks like a king. Though never stated in so many words, Kronos is a student and follower of Zen culture and eastern thought. We see him chant and meditate, smoke a provincial Chinese herb in cigar form, and carry a Samurai sword with him into battles with the undead and the uncouth. He sports a regal family crest on all of his important possessions, suggesting a highly civilized background... or, as Munro conjectured, royalty. He is brave (drawing his sword at even the least abnormal sound), passionate (he possesses Munro as a mistress during his stay in the village), and loyal (defending the hunchbacked Grost from a group of rugged local bastards, led by Ian Hendry in a bravura-packed performance). His undead opponent is a black-cloaked vision of sin and death that has been terrorizing the villagers for ages, by kissing young virgins on the lips and, thus, draining them of their youth and beauty.

As you may have gathered, *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* is not the conventional vampire film we have come to expect from Hammer.

it attempts to explain vampirism in a new light: there are different breeds of vampires and just as many different ways of disposing of them. For the creatures in this picture, the cross offers no opponence, nor does the usual impalement with a stake. Through mere chance, Kronos discovers that wounds inflicted by silver prove fatal to this local species, and his assistant Grost prepares a new sword for him, sculpted from a large silver crucifix. The finished product is undeniably a beautiful thing, the definitive expression of moral strength and health.

As a motion picture, *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* works on several levels. It is very much fashioned after the western, with its abundance of outdoor shots and the bar scene with Hendry, most notably. It is quite obviously a swashbuckler, featuring the superb fencing skills of William Hobbs that were well used in Zefferelli's *ROMEO AND JULIET*. Because the identity of the vampire isn't revealed until the picture's conclusion, the mystery genre could well enter the list of homages. Horror is prevalent throughout the film. The atmosphere of terror is remarkably sustained, and a few sequences—most certainly the scene in the church with the silhouette of the crucifix—should make an impact on the horror genre for being some of the most poetic ever filmed.

Although the reputations of Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens were promoted strongly on films like *DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE* and *THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD* for their connection with the old, fondly remembered television series *THE AVENGERS*, it is here in *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* that the quality of that excellent series is felt for the first time. The *Jekyll/Hyde* film suffered from obvious plot twists and ill-conceived humor, and the *Sinbad* film came as an immense disappointment, not so much because of the involvement of Brian Clemens, but due to Ray Harryhausen's seemingly bland conception of spectacle. *KRONOS*, however, is quick and exciting, and executed with the same fast pace and wit that we used to expect weekly from John Steed and Emma Peel.

When *SCARS OF DRACULA* was released, we said that Hammer was returning to form after a long period of unsatisfactory entries. When *VAMPIRE CIRCUS* was released we said that Hammer re-discovered excitement. *CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER* has now come and gone, and it establishes Hammer once more as one of the genre's most valued and respected studios.

Tim Lucas

Shane Briant, Dave Prowse, Madeline Smith and Peter Cushing in **FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL**, the latest entry in the continuing series from Hammer Films, currently in release from Paramount Pictures. The film is not Hammer Films' touted "return to the classic mold of the horror film," except on the most superficial level.



FRANKENSTEIN & THE MONSTER FROM HELL

...the superficial apeing of past triumphs.

FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL A Paramount Pictures Release. 6/74. In Color. 93 minutes. Produced by Roy Skeggs. Directed by Terence Fisher. Screenplay by John Elder. Director of photography, Brian Probyn, B.S.C. Edited by James Needs. Music by James Bernard. Makeup, Eddie Knight.

Baron Frankenstein Peter Cushing
Simon Shane Briant
Sarah Madeline Smith
Monster Dave Prowse
Asylum Director John Stratton

As someone who grew up watching Peter Cushing, **CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** and **HORROR OF DRACULA** and can still admire these all from a perspective that is not just purely nostalgic, Hammer's touted "return to the classic mold of the horror film" with its latest film, **FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL**, strikes me as a complete misreading of what that classic mold really was. First of all, Hammer has never abandoned its elegant period atmosphere and costuming and rich color photography, so those hungering for a return can hardly be missing these elements. So what is missing?

When Hammer finally introduced overt sex into its films with **THE VAMPIRE LOVERS**, exposed flesh had by that time already become old hat. And yet when the Hammer team for the first time gave Dracula a sexual presence in their 1958 film, the idea really was a first, offering the character numerous dimensions of personality that had heretofore been ignored. Hammer was looking for something new and it was discovered not only in costumes and color but in characterization as well. **CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** for the first time gave us a Baron von Frankenstein more villainous than his creation, **HORROR OF DRACULA**, in addition to providing a vampire with depth, gave us a neurotic hero, Van Helsing, who could pound stakes through human hearts without batting an eye and who finally could take no joy in the destruction of his life-long nemesis because he suddenly realized that he had lost his own reason for being. **BRIDES OF DRACULA** left Dracula dead to concentrate on a new vampire, Baron Meinster, who had been "corrupted" at school. And **THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES** brought us the screen's first erratic Sherlock Holmes and intelligent Dr. Watson—the way Conan Doyle had written about them. It was the characterizations, not simply the characters and their predictable deeds, which made these early films interesting.

In this new film, Peter Cushing once again

plays Dr. Frankenstein, whose secret lab is part of an insane asylum, where he has been sentenced for crimes of "sorcery." As Dr. Victor he has gained control of the asylum, and cares for the inmates and patients much the same as he did in **REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN**, secretly amputating limbs to create his newest monster. Along comes another young disciple, sentenced for a similar crime, and the ball starts rolling once again in predictable fashion until the monster is torn apart by the mob of frenzied inmates, reversing the ending of the earlier film.

Obviously Hammer is trying to make the antecedents of this new film quite clear. But no matter what anyone says, **FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL** is not a return to the classic mold except on the most superficial level. The paramount difference is Frankenstein himself, for he is simply not the same doctor we met back in the late fifties. The fanatical villainy brought out in **CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** is gone. The surreptitious, almost paranoid villainy of **REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN** is also gone. Like Lee's Dracula, the personality of Dr. Frankenstein has been drained away over the years (beginning with John Elder's screenplay for **EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN**), turning Cushing's once believable Baron finally into a cardboard clown prince who can't seem to do anything right, and, what's more, doesn't even seem to care that he can't. Without showing even the slightest flicker of frustration, Cushing announces at this film's end that it's back to the old drawing board—paving the way for yet another sequel. If Hammer really believes this sad, flimsy conclusion shows a return to the classic mold, Hammer is wrong. Even though **CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN** and **REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN** left room for sequels, they still offered legitimate endings. They were individual movies, not just 90-minute setups for future ones.

Having lost ready U.S. distribution for each new production, Hammer is floundering to regain the excitement its name once held for millions of moviegoers. Part of the problem is the lack of adequate, imaginative advertising, a malaise from which the entire film industry suffers. But the major problem with Hammer is its reliance on uninspired talent like John Elder and Terence Fisher (who has always been only as good as his scripts told him to be) and restrictive formulas, like introducing female Draculas who simply act out the same tired male vampire clichés. It is in variety and substance that Hammer will rediscover its classic mold, not in the superficial apeing of past triumphs.

John McCarty

JONATHAN

...as frightening--and as beautiful--as the genre to which it belongs.

JONATHAN A New Yorker Films Release. 9/72. In Eastmancolor. 103 minutes. An Iduna Films Production. Written and directed by Hans W. Geissendorfer. Director of photography, Robby Muller. Edited by Wolfgang Hedinger. Sound, Ludwig Prost. Art director, Hans Gailling. Music by Roland Kovac. West German.

Jonathan Jurgen Jung
Josef Hans Dieter Jendreyko
The Count Paul Albert Krumm
Thomas Thomas Astan
Lena's Mother Ilse Kunkle
Lena Eleonore Schminke

It is not for nothing that Hans Geissendorfer has broken with tradition to name his vampire film **JONATHAN**, after his hero. Jonathan is a mere mortal, torn between two worlds, who increasingly finds that he is an outcast in both of them. With the worlds of the peasant and the vampire both reaching out for him, Jonathan is tragically caught in the middle, a victim of both.

Geissendorfer provides his film with a cruel climate in which anything is possible, anything can happen and probably will. Even after the destruction of the vampires at the end of the film, in a series of beautifully icy shots of the creatures dissolving beneath their clothes in the sea, Jonathan is attacked by a girl assumed to have been freed from the domination of the vampires. With that stroke, the camera begins a fast tracking shot down the shoreline, isolating Jonathan in the upper left corner of the frame. The menace of this world has not disappeared with the vampires, it is a constant, unending, and elusive fact.

Below this striking surface lies the fact that Geissendorfer continually exploits our conventional attitudes toward horror films. Seeing such fare, we are all voyeurs of the forbidden, all of us watching and enjoying, perhaps even being titillated by, events we should hope never to witness in real life. When one puts **JONATHAN** on a kind of moral scale and realizes that the violence of the peasants, particularly through the first half of the film, far outweighs that of the vampires, one suspects that there are many other things weighing on the mind of Geissendorfer than a reasonably humorless but harmless tale of vampires. Add to this, the film's undercutting of conventional narrative suspense and blunt ignorances of traditional vampire lore (to which vampire films and their fans seem to demand a nearly fanatic adherence), its peculiar style and visuals, the perfunctory acting, and the fact that the nearly constant violence is nearly always by its intensely graphic quality Brechtian in tone (as artificial and stylized as the floating group of white-robed children who strike odd, wind-swept poses throughout the film). One realizes, then, that Geissendorfer is more concerned with problems of oppression, paranoia, xenophobia, and the psychological nature of facism, problems less definable, let alone solvable, than the black and white world of the vampire tale.

JONATHAN is an important film, for it represents what genre filmmaking sorely needs: individuals who competently use the genre not only for its surface thrills but for more important and perhaps personal comments. Geissendorfer is a young, West German filmmaker known primarily for his work in documentaries, although he has directed three other fiction films as well. His use of the horror genre here is—dare I say it?—similar to Godard in the '60s and his use of the Hollywood-esque crime film for political, anarchic purposes. It has received outstanding critical notices throughout the world: German reviewer Wolf Donner noted in the newspaper *Die Zeit* that "From the opening sequences, Hans W. Geissendorfer's **JONATHAN** is as frightening—and as beautiful—as the genre to which it belongs."

David Bartholomew



Michael Murphy and Lynne Frederick stand to face a brave new world at the conclusion of *PHASE IV*, an ecological suspense tale currently in release from Paramount Pictures. At left, the new inheritors, a race of super-intelligent ants, distinguished by the diamond-shaped mark on their heads, who organize the ant populations of the earth.

PHASE IV

...individualists are likely to find it a disturbing film.

PHASE IV A Paramount Pictures Release. 9/74. In Technicolor. 91 minutes. Produced by Paul Radin. Directed by Saul Bass. Screenplay by Mayo Simon. Director of photography, Dick Bush. Special ant photography, Ken Middleham. Art director, John Barry. Music composed and conducted by Brian Gascoigne. Electronics realized with David Vorhaus. Montage music by Yamashita. Edited by Willy Kemplen.

Hubbs Nigel Davenport
Kendra Lynne Frederick
Lesko Michael Murphy
Mr. Eldridge Alan Gifford
Mrs. Eldridge Helen Horton
Clete Robert Henderson

Perhaps someday an enterprising scholar will write a book entitled *Insects In the Cinema*. Any categorization which includes *UN CHIEN ANDALOU*, *MOTHR*, and *THE WASP WOMAN* is worth some scholarly analysis. Films about insects taking over the world occupy a special niche in the science fiction genre. What distinguishes *PHASE IV* from its forerunners is scale; in previous films, the offending creatures were always giant-size: ants in *THEM*, a praying mantis in *THE DEADLY MANTIS*, grasshoppers in *BEGINNING OF THE END*, a spider in *TARANTULA*, and scorpions in *THE BLACK SCORPION*. (Taxonomists, please note: I am aware that spiders and scorpions are arachnids, not insects, but for the sake of argument, I beg your indulgence.) Only in *THE NAKED JUNGLE* do we see normal ants attacking normal people, but since the ants failed to knock over Charlton Heston's plantation, they can hardly be classified as a threat to mankind. *PHASE IV* delineates the struggle between ants and man for global supremacy, but the film has little in common with any of the aforementioned films, *THE HELLSTROM CHRONICLE* is the most obvious influence because of the technique of extreme close-up cinematography (Ken Middleham photographed the insect sequences for both films), but *PHASE IV* is more memorable because it dramatizes what *THE HELLSTROM CHRONICLE* merely relates.

PHASE IV begins with an astronomical phenomenon, the aftermath of which is anxiously awaited by scientists and laymen alike. The anticipated widespread catastrophes do not occur, but some disturbing changes take place in ant behavior: antagonistic species stop fighting and gang up on their predators. An English biologist and an American cryptologist-mathematician set up shop at a laboratory in the Arizona desert,

where ant behavior is particularly noisome and human beings have been evacuated, except for one recalcitrant family. At first, the ants are quiet, but the biologist blows up seven towers they have constructed, and the battle begins: the ants retaliate by destroying the scientists' truck; the scientists spray a poisonous chemical around the perimeter of their laboratory, killing a large number of ants, as well as three of the four members of the family that had failed to evacuate (the fourth member, a teen-age girl, takes refuge in the laboratory); the ants reply by constructing reflective devices around the laboratory, increasing the temperature within, and rendering the scientists' equipment useless; the scientists use sound waves to destroy the reflectors, but it is too little too late. Convinced that killing the queen ant is the only way to victory, the biologist attempts to locate her, only to be trapped and killed by the ants, who allow the cryptologist and the girl to remain alive. The ants make them "part of their world."

As in *THE THING* and *THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN*, an unpublicized conflict taking place at a remote outpost has worldwide consequences. During the battle in *PHASE IV* a slow but inexorable change in the balance of power is effected: the roles are reversed—or to be more accurate, the scientists finally realize that they are the subjects and the ants are the experimenters.

The formidable feats of the ants are a result of superior social organization: "perfect altruism, harmony, and social structure," as the biologist puts it. Contrasted with the tightly-knit ant society is the loose organization of human society, or at least what little of it we can discern from the relationships of the six people in the film. The ranchers do not evacuate when ordered, the girl's irrationality and ignorance disrupt the efficiency of the laboratory operations, and the biologist is callously indifferent to his fellow men. He cares not at all about the welfare of the girl, and he is not moved by the death of her three relatives. His attitude towards the dead of his own species contrasts sharply with that of the ants. The ants slain by the poisonous chemical are withdrawn by survivors and taken behind the lines, so to speak, where they are lined up in even rows, as well-regimented in death as they were in life. Even between the two scientists there are serious disputes. The biologist, a student of life (a "soft" scientist), is less compassionate than the cryptologist, who is engaged in a more abstract (or "hard") science. The biologist takes a hard line: he wants to challenge the ants, to show them man is the master. The cryptologist, who spends most of his time deciphering

the ants' language, is primarily interested in communicating with them. This dichotomy is nothing new in science fiction films: there are men of action who wish to kill alien creatures and men of thought who wish to communicate with them, as in *THE THING*, *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS*, *FIRST MEN IN THE MOON*, and *PLANET OF THE APES*, in a clever reversal. Usually the killers prevail and the communicators fall by the wayside, but in *PHASE IV* the killer is killed and the communicator survives.

Although individual ants can be exterminated easily, the society is invincible, not only because of superior organization, but also because of the ability to adapt, evinced by the ants' rapid immunity to the poisonous chemical. As any good Darwinist knows, evolution favors populations, not individuals; hence *PHASE IV* could be interpreted as a paean to regimentation and totalitarianism, and a critique of individualism. Granted, it is difficult to transpose characteristics of ant society to human society, but individualists, whether rugged or romantic, are likely to find *PHASE IV* a disturbing film.

Because of their small size, indestructible social fabric, and ability to permeate areas which are inaccessible to larger creatures, the ants are a more insidious menace than their oversized brethren in *THEM*. Man-eating ants the size of tractor trailers cannot help but be evil, but the ants of *PHASE IV* possess an almost demonic intelligence: clearly they can dispose of the humans whenever they want, but their gamesmanship and experimentation are more sadistic than moving in for a quick kill.

Visually, *PHASE IV* is dynamic, due in large measure to the direction of Saul Bass, a graphic artist whose title designs have graced the opening moments of many features. (His most memorable credit sequences include the sleek, slow-motion of a black cat in *A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE*, the animated mutable globe in *IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD*, and the harsh, strident black and white perpendicularity of *PSYCHO*.) *PHASE IV* includes graphic sequences, extreme close-up cinematography, and arid, foreboding landscapes. Bass, however, never falls into the trap other visual artists often fall into when they turn to directing feature films: he never dwells on a visual effect for its own sake (as cinematographer Nicholas Roeg did when he directed *WALKABOUT* and *DON'T LOOK NOW*). As is the case with many new directors, Saul Bass has directed a genre film his first time out. Whether or not he remains in the genre, his future work will bear watching.

Frank Jackson



Michael Pataki.

GRAVE OF THE VAMPIRE An Entertainment Pyramid Release. 10/73. In Color. 95 minutes. Directed by John Hayes. Produced by Daniel Cad- dy. Screenplay by David Chase. With: William Smith, Michael Pataki, Lyn Peters.

This film will never win any awards for quality, but it could conceivably earn some reputation for its originality: a young couple's necking session is crudely interrupted when a vampire rips off the car door, kills the boyfriend, and rapes the young lady in an open plot that was obviously quite handy after a hundred or more years of inactivity. The girl gives birth to a small grey infant who refuses to be fed until his mother punches a few cuts in her breast (the infant is attracted to blood, quite naturally). The child grows into a reasonably good looking college student that has apparently outgrown his need for plasma. When he discovers that his undead dad is masquerading as a campus professor, he sets out to revenge the rape of his mother. Regardless of the very creative premise and the usually palatable Michael Pataki performance, the film dies once the picture is half completed. All inspiration for the project is lost the moment the baby grows to manhood. Complete with the oh-so-typical Count Yorga conclusion, the film disintegrates very slowly before your eyes. Isn't that just like a vampire?

Tim Lucas

EXORCISM'S DAUGHTER A National Forum Corporation Release. 5/74. In Eastmancolor. 93 minutes. Produced by Daurio Films. Written and directed by Rafael Moreno Alba. With: Amelia Gade, Francisco Rabal, Espartaco Santoni.

This might be classified as the rip-off movie of the year if it were not for the sad fact so many others are fighting for this dubious honor by chasing the fast buck in the wake of the huge success of *THE EXORCIST*. Like most of the entries in this curious sweepstakes, this film is an old foreign movie, newly dubbed, which has been rushed to the U.S. in hopes its meager link with "exorcism" will make it a profitable venture.

Actually, the exorcism theme in this Spanish import emerges in the last reel and does not amount to much. It is insanity, not the Devil, that is plaguing the heroine (Amelia Gade), who is locked away and treated shabbily in a 19th-century madhouse. A dedicated young doctor (Espartaco Santoni) arrives at the asylum to help her, but he is generally blocked by the cruel administrator and the town's leading citizen, a wealthy widow who tries unsuccessfully to lure the doctor to her bed. In the end, the doctor discovers the source of the heroine's chaotic mental state (as a child, she watched her mother die during an exorcism rite), but before he can cure her, he is forced to leave by the townspeople who fear his Freudian methods are a new form of witchcraft.

Francisco Rabal, best remembered as Bunuel's NAZARIN, lends the picture class as the drunken administrator. There are also hints that director Alba has studied his Bunuel—some loving looks at insects and a horror sequence in a bell tower—yet in this instance these artful hints are like seeds falling on barren ground.

Robert L. Jerome

BLOOD A Joseph Kent Presentation. 8/74. In Color. 74 minutes. Produced by Walter Kent. Written and directed by Andy Milligan. With: Allan Berendt, Hope Stransbury, Eve Crosby, Patti Gaul, Pamela Adams.

This mercifully short horror film is yet another horrid exercise from Andy Milligan, who has for several years been churning out films of unbelievable crudity in England. This, as the director's earlier efforts, should be avoided at all costs. In this one, Dracula's daughter and Larry Talbot's son meet, marry and travel to 1899 America (which looks suspiciously like present day England) and when not mouthing dialogue like—she, "Go to Hell!" he, "We are in Hell!"—attempt to cure their afflictions by fooling with carnivorous plants. Talbot falls in love with the landlord's daughter and a distraught wife starts a fire which consumes all. Acting, direction and all technical credits are slipshod.

John Duvoli

SHORT NOTICES

THE CASTLE OF FU MANCHU An International Cinema Corporation Release. 4/74. In Color and Scope. 87 minutes. Produced by Harry Alan Towers. Directed by Jess Franco. Screenplay by Peter Welbeck. With: Christopher Lee, Gunther Stoll, Richard Greene, Tsia Chin.

Christopher Lee is once again a perfect picture of elegance and evil as the famed Oriental super-villain, but the production—the fifth in the series produced by Harry Alan Towers on a shredded shoestring—is strictly el cheapo and truly lackluster in its execution of the, by now, routine plot elements. There is an almost laughable interlude where a German doctor and his blonde assistant perform a heart transplant with all the expertise of a couple digging for clams. Even the predictable heroics of Fu's arch-enemy, Nayland Smith, has a very tired air to it. At the close, Fu threatens to return ("The world has not seen the last of Fu Manchu") but this entry suggests the series is, indeed, at the end of the road.

Robert L. Jerome

CRAZE A Warner Bros Release. 6/74. In Technicolor. 96 minutes. Produced by Herman Cohen. Directed by Freddie Francis. Screenplay by Herman Cohen and Aben Kandel based on *The Infernal Idol* by Henry Seymour. With: Jack Palance, Diana Dors, Julie Ege, Trevor Howard.

There is a lot of talent wasted in this, a transparent tale of a middle-aged London antiques dealer (Jack Palance) gone nutty over an African devil god named Chuku. It seems almost as if everyone signed on for fat salaries, then discovered that the producer and co-writer was Z-man Herman Cohen. Tricked up with some gore to hide its rottenness, the film features an all-star cast (following the Amicus-begun tradition) playing mainly victims. But the non-story is trite and the dialogue dumb enough to put the film squarely in the bad-funny category. Director Freddie Francis, showing none of his customary spirit, seems as trapped here as everyone else. Most helpless of all, because he has the leading role, is Palance. Eyes screwed shut and voice wheezing, his face constantly dissolving into a sea of wrinkles and grimaces, Palance exudes distaste from every pore. Some actors can wiggle their ears, but Palance is the only one I know of who can shift his hairline back a good two inches simply by arching his eyebrows.

David Bartholomew

HEX A 20th Century-Fox Film. 1973. In Color. 90 minutes. Produced by Clark Paylow. Directed by Leo Garen. Screenplay by Garen and Steve Katz based on an original story by Doran William Cannon and Vernon Zimmerman. With: Keith Carradine, Scott Glenn, Robert Walker, Jr., Tina Herazo, Hilarie Thompson, Mike Combs.

Norman Mailer named this film as one of the 10 Best Films of 1973. It isn't. It is good, however, and the only reason that Fox hasn't released it is that they cannot figure out for whom the film was made. It has elements of many different genres: set in the grasslands (the original and much better title) of the U.S. in the early part

of the 20th Century, it at first seems like a period-piece motorcycle movie—the heroes dash about on vintage cycles. They have a run-in with some hostile townsfolk; fleeing them, they take up with two girls who live on an isolated ranch. There are elements of comedy, romance, tragedy, and of a bucolic pastoral. The fantasy elements are minimal for most of the film. One of the sisters decides to kill the motorcyclists for their intrusion into the girl's isolation. (The cyclists pretty much deserve being killed, too.) She has Indian witchcraft powers, and kills one of them with an owl, another in a bog, and another by turning him against his group, and so on. One body she hides by turning it into a cloud of birds; she explodes most of the motorcycles by witchcraft. Finally, only two of the motorcyclists are left, and the decisions they make are out of keeping with the rest of the film, and provide a totally unsatisfactory ending. I can see why Fox is reluctant about the film—the last word is that it goes on the shelf for good. Too bad—a promising first feature for director Leo Garen.

Bill Warren

MADHOUSE An American-International Pictures Release. 3/74. In Color. 89 minutes. Produced by Milton Subotsky and Max J. Rosenberg. Directed by Jim Clark. Screenplay by Greg Morrison. With: Vincent Price, Peter Cushing, Robert Quarry, Adrienne Corri, Natasha Pyne, Linda Hayden.

A mysterious figure in a long, flowing cape puts on a pair of black gloves and carefully selects a lethal-looking knife from a sinister attache case. Yes, it's another Vincent Price ghoulfest, yet there are a couple of nice (nasty?) surprises in store, and one of the most substantial is the presentation of Price as more victim than villain.

In a prologue, Price is introduced as a Hollywood actor, celebrated for his performance as "Dr. Death" in a series of horror films. At a party Price has a falling out with his fiancée and moments later the girl is found dead—decapitated in the murderous style of Dr. Death. A siege of madness follows and years later he is summoned to England by an old colleague (Peter Cushing) to star in a TV series based on the Dr. Death character. Immediately Price is beset by a bitchy producer (Robert Quarry, playing it to the hilt) and the spectre of an old leading lady (Adrienne Corri) who is now a half-mad spider woman. Poor Price's chances of returning to the sunny farm are brutally murdered and, again (!), the crimes carry the trademark of Dr. Death.

The Amicus film generally sustains a properly spooky atmosphere, though it is not especially long on characterization; in fact, Price's part is pretty much filled out by presenting a number of film clips from his early American-International features—stretching from the pasty-faced Price of *HOUSE OF USHER* to the flesh-rotting corpse of *TALES OF TERROR*. When the villain is finally unmasked, we realize, somewhat sadly, we never got to know him well enough to judge his public image by his foul, private deeds.

Robert L. Jerome

Price and Linda Hayden clown during the filming of *MADHOUSE*, another Vincent Price ghoulfest.



Jean-Pierre Leaud.

PIG PEN A New Line Cinema Release. 1974. In Eastmancolor. 93 minutes. An IDI Cinematographica (Rome)/I Film Dell'Orso (Rome)/INDIFF (Rome) C.A.P.A.C. (Paris) Production. Written and directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini. With: Jean-Pierre Leaud, Pierre Clementi, Alberto Lionello, Ugo Tognazzi, Anne Wiazemsky, Margarita Lozano. Original title: *PORCILE*.

Director Pasolini cuts together two separate, extended tales, in his 1969 film only now becoming available in the U.S. In one, set in the present, the pampered son (Jean-Pierre Leaud) of a bourgeois industrialist (Alberto Lionello) comes under pressure to marry his childhood sweetheart (Anne Wiazemsky). At the same time another powerful industrialist (Ugo Tognazzi) tries to induce a partnership with his father, thus uniting their economic power (in "buttons, beer and cannon"). Disinterested in almost everything, Leaud balks, a power struggle between the business rivals unfolds in which Lionello is beaten, precipitated by an aide's discovery that Leaud, so bored and lethargic that he slips into a coma at one point in the film, daily runs off to a nearby pigsty to have sex with the pigs. At the end, the pigs devour Leaud (off-screen) and Lionello, made up to look like Hitler, limps off in defeat. The second tale, set in a wilderness of not only place but time, follows the exploits of a "savage" (Pierre Clementi) as he wanders through a desolate, windy, arid area (actually the Mt. Aetna slopes). One by one, a filthy band of followers gather around him who plunder and murder and eventually eat everyone who comes near them. A nearby village raises an army; in an ambush the gang is subdued and staked out on the ground for the wild dogs to shred and eat.

Pasolini's film is strange and brutal: the tales are beautifully photographed in color and constantly complement yet oppose each other. Ironies, most of them not too subtle, abound. The film is not so much muddled as obscure and ultimately disappointing considering Pasolini's previous work, the masterful *TEORAMA* (1968). The cast is excellent (including now-directors Marco Ferreri and Franco Citti) but ineffective since their various acting styles conflict, a fact apparently not of concern to Pasolini; all seems to be subordinated to Pasolini's very personal mis-en-scene. The film's chief political theme, that activity (Clementi) as well as inactivity (Leaud) are equally destructive and futile seems depressing, perhaps an indication of Pasolini's growing pessimism, since he left off making this kind of film with this one. Perhaps it is best seen, considering the fascinating Clementi sequences, as marking a bridge from his earlier films to the completely stylized, politically artificial, literary constructions, beginning with *MEDEA* (1970) and on to the trilogy.

David Bartholomew

DERANGED An American-International Pictures Release. 5/74. In Color. 82 minutes. Produced by Tom Karr. Directed by Jeff Gillen and Alan Ormsby. Screenplay by Ormsby. With: Roberts Blossom, Cosette Lee, Leslie Carlson.

This film is made by the same outfit that made *CHILDREN SHOULDN'T PLAY WITH DEAD THINGS*, but unlike that film, isn't remotely a comedy. In fact, it is *PSYCHO*—that is, it is based on the same real-life incidents which gave Robert Bloch the idea for his novel. The famous "Wisconsin Ghoul," Ed Gein, who for quite a while without being discovered, dug up bodies and ate them (this in the 1950s), tanned the skin from some of them, and finally resorted to murder, is well-played here by Roberts Blossom. The facts in the case are not strictly followed, and Gein's name is not used, but the main details are there. One element picked up from *PSYCHO* is the protagonist's mummifying his mother. The film is definitely treated as horror, though with rigid documentary trappings (an on-screen narrator is intrusive). It is slow-paced and ludicrous at times, but the emphasis on vivid details and Blossom's fine performance raise it above the programmer level. It is shot in a bleak, naked style, apparently in Wisconsin or some other northern Midwest state. Overall, an interesting if somewhat trashy film.

Bill Warren



Jim Dale and Richard Beaumont give an antidote to DIGBY, THE BIGGEST DOG IN THE WORLD.

JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL A Paramount Pictures Release. 12/73. In Panavision and Color by DeLuxe. 101 minutes. Produced and directed by Hall Bartlett. Screenplay by Richard Bach based on his novel. With the voices of: James Franciscus, Richard Crenna.

I suppose that, like the book, this film will become a timeless classic. Would that it were also a great film. The story of a seagull fighting to maintain his individuality, even after death, to search for perfection in flight, and finding others to realize this great mission and follow him, has little thrust or continuity from one scene to the next. A structure is, more than often, sadly lacking and in desperate need here. Filmmaker Hall Bartlett is probably to blame for this more than anyone else. At first a two-hour film, the release print has been cut again and again by Bartlett to tighten things up, but to little avail.

Enough harsh words. It is magnificently, breathtakingly, awesomely photographed, without any of the ponderous, pretentious lyricism of a David Lean. With the help of brilliant nature photographer, Jack Couffer (who directed the underrated *DARWIN ADVENTURE*), Bartlett gives us shots of flying gulls soaring over ocean, cliffs, deserts, skies, clouds, and stars that are packed with lyrical intensity and power. But the rare, beautiful aspect of the film can be found in the manner that Bartlett photographs the character talents of the trained birds. He so obviously takes great delight in their behavior that his camera catches feelings that no words can express, and the breathless aerial views only help to enhance these feelings of joy, exhilaration, warmth, and tenderness.

The film's major, most profound virtue lies in Bartlett's ability to draw one in, even with all the faults around it, to a hypnotic involvement with flight and all the wondrous possibilities that lie therein, and with the engaging personalities of the seagulls. Unfortunately, there is still a bit too much of it, and the pictorialism has a tendency to stagger and fall with the continuity. As the voice of Jonathan, James Franciscus is perfect with his low, scratchy delivery that becomes an asset to the film's mesmerizing power. One only wishes the dialog was as effective, since it ranges from childish palaver to pretentious high-flown rhetoric that is neither intriguingly philosophical or enhancing. With all its beauties and problems, one thing is for sure, the film will survive it all. Time will place it in a golden frame, and much of its charm, wonder, and grace will remain.

Dale Winogura

Jonathan Livingston Seagull.



DIGBY, THE BIGGEST DOG IN THE WORLD A Cinerama Release. 6/74. In Technicolor. 88 minutes. Produced by Walter Shenson. Directed by Joseph McGrath. Screenplay by Michael Pertwee. With: Jim Dale, Spike Milligan, Angela Douglas, John Bluthal, Norman Rossington, Milo O'Shea, Richard Beaumont, Dinsdale Landon, Garfield Morgan, Victor Spinetti, Harry Towb.

This film relates the mis-adventures of a shy, klutzy animal psychologist (Jim Dale), his almost girlfriend (Angela Douglas) and a boy (Richard Beaumont) and his dog, with the latter falling victim to an accidental dose of a secret scientific formula that causes immediate and unlimited growth. Weaving in and out of this genuine and refreshing frolic are a pair of crooks, some stiff military and scientific officials (including a German psychiatrist in need of some help himself, marvelously played by Spike Milligan), a second-rate circus and a smart chimpanzee.

This is a family movie, which means with its G-rating that it is aimed primarily at the children's market and considered safe for everyone. It is quite the best of its type I have seen in quite a long time. The people who made it obviously and joyously show respect for, if not complete understanding of, children and the way they think (and most importantly for us, perhaps, of adults as well) to an extent that I have seen only in films not really meant for children, like *THE OTHER* and *NIGHT OF THE HUNTER*. It is a welcome antidote for the entire chain of live-action Disney movies, which show for the most part an uncomfortable condescension for their audience. For adults, the films are shrill and unwatchable. There is much more to children and their complex world than funny VWs, jungle-bred track stars and cute-as-a-button animals.

Before the film is done, with some adequate special effects and process photography (by Tom Howard), it has tackled monster movie formulae, with specific visual references to *KING KONG*, and spanned over generous dollops of slapstick and sight gags. It is the kind of frenetic film that only the British seem able to pull off successfully. American attempts are far too important and heavy-footed, as if they're scared of not pleasing everyone and therefore take no risks. The high spirits here even allow several jokes to fall flat without the film's missing a beat. An army of fine and familiar British actors provide excellent performances under Joseph McGrath's generally sharp direction.

David Bartholomew

THE DYBBUK An Audio-Brandon Release. 1974. In Color. 95 minutes. Produced by Amatzin Hini and Adi Cohen. Directed by Ilan Eldad. Based on the play by Sholom Anski. Screenplay by Shraga Friedman. With: David Opatoshu, Peter Frye, Tina Wodetzky, Moti Barkan, Tutte Lemka, Raphael Catzkin, Devorah Kastellanetz, Boruch Klass. Seen at Filmex '74.

Oy, vey! This incredibly bad and boring film is based on a Jewish play, an unbelievably inept hunk of ancient dramaturgy. It was made in Israel in 1968 and was not picked up for U.S. distribution, which is most understandable. Ilan Eldad uses inexpressively muted colors, a ponderously funereal pace, and ridiculously jarring and pointless incorporations of song, group dance, and even ballet (!) to tell this indulgently pious, dreadfully shallow narrative. He also makes it fairly drip with Jewish sentimentality, religiosity, and muted stereotypes, further compounding the atrocity. I can't see any director or actor (even the stalwart David Opatoshu, seen here as a long-white-bearded Rabbi and exorcist) overcoming such a dull, worthless antique of a play, unless it's completely overhauled by some gutsy, talented writer. Until then, another movie of this play is unthinkable. Audio-Brandon has a fine 16mm rental print, perhaps the only one extant in this country, but don't bother unless you're really curious, or out of your mind and in need of an exorcist.

Dale Winogura

SUGAR HILL An American-International Release. 2/74. In Color. 90 minutes. Produced by Elliot Schick. Directed by Paul Maslansky. Screenplay by Tim Kelly. With: Marki Bey, Robert Quarry, Don Pedro Colley, Betty Ann Rees, Richard Lawson, Charles Robinson, Judy Hanson.

This is another in a seemingly endless series of black hero (read heroine here) versus the white villain exploitation film, borrowing the already tired story of the sexy black girl who gets even with a white "mob" who killed her man but original in its novel plot development—heroine Marki Bey uses an army of zombies instead of the gun and knife. Miss Bey is "Sugar," who visits an aging voodoo princess after her boyfriend is murdered by the henchmen of mobster Robert Quarry. The princess equips Miss Bey with a zombie army, who are put to abundant use.

While much of the film is intentionally racist, director Maslansky and writer Kelly bring to the proceedings a greater degree of professionalism than most makers of films of this type. Good use of color, make-up and music help cover for Miss Bey's undistinguished performance and the weak supporting cast. Sole effective performances come from Quarry, a mobster, and from Don Pedro Colley, who walks away with the film as a "Voodoo God." It is only when Colley is on that the film rises above strict not-thought entertainment. Despite its shortcomings however, it's fun if you don't take it seriously, and understand that it is geared to entertain a very unsophisticated audience. There are a few moments of clever dialogue but the film's finale, in which the black "God" (who possesses quite human sexual desires) claims Quarry's sex-pot mistress (Betty Ann Rees) as a prize for helping Bey is indicative of the film's intent to provide indifferently executed cinema for undemanding black audiences.

John Duvoli

SON OF DRACULA A Cinematone Industries Release. 4/74. In Color. 90 minutes. Produced by Ringo Starr. Directed by Freddie Francis. Original screenplay by Jay Fairbank. With: Harry Nilsson, Ringo Starr, Freddie Jones, Dennis Price, Peter Frampton, Keith Moon, John Bonham.

Although it can't make up its mind whether it wants to be funny or just plain bizarre, Ringo Starr's debut as a producer succeeds and fails on many levels and just about even out, but it does have the distinction of being the "first rock'n'roll Dracula movie!" Director Freddie Francis turns in his usual patchwork job. Faced with a lumbering style from his director, producer and star Ringo must be credited for the high camp treatment. The makeup is wonderfully funny and an obvious good-natured poke at the classic Universal monsters and the makeup of Jack Pierce. Where else would you find a Frankenstein monster with a greasy t-shirt and a pot-belly? As Count Down, Son of Dracula, Harry Nilsson is surprisingly good. The gamut of emotions that run across his face are not many, as he is deadpan most of the time, but his complete seriousness during even the most ridiculous moments is the plus factor here. The rock music sequences are all uniformly excellent. This is definitely one of a handful of successful rock films. Nilsson is a fine singer and writer and they use the best of his material. Back-up musicians include Peter Frampton and members of his band with help from Keith Moon of the Who (on a terribly funny cheap drum set) and John Bonham from Led Zeppelin. Ringo as Merlin the Magician is totally miscast, but then, what is Merlin the Magician doing in modern England anyway? This film plays havoc with all the original legends and adaptations. Dr. Frankenstein supposedly killed Count Dracula, Van Helsing helps the vampire's son and they are all vying for supremacy in the "netherworld." Freddie Jones as Dr. Frankenstein is a bit too much. Without a line of dialogue, he is quite funny to look at as he hams it up, but his talking scenes were at times too thick. One par-

Harry Nilsson as Count Down and Ringo Starr as Merlin in SON OF DRACULA.



Don Pedro Colley & Betty Ann Rees.

ticular sequence, as he and his hunchback dwarf Igor steal a radioactive trans-uranium element, is hilarious. They not only can't carry the element out and a mummified monster has to get up off of a cart and help, but they somehow managed to find a protective suit just Igor's size and shape. Dennis Price underplays Van Helsing and is the only horror film veteran in the cast aside from Jones. His performance somehow balances out the overplaying of others. So much of the film looks like something out of a Jack Kirby comic book, and I think that defines the style and artistic intent. It should have been directed by Richard Lester, who was most likely busy on the superb *THREE MUSKETEERS*. The film is definitely more his style than that of Freddie Francis, and Lester has been more successful than any other director in shaping a film around rock music and rock personalities. The visual bits combined with his side-comment style would have made this concept work fully. Still, the movie is fun and diverting. There may even be a sequel. Let's hope Ringo gets a better director next time.

Mick Martin

THE BABY A Scotia International Release. 8/74. In Color. 85 minutes. Produced by Milton and Abe Polsky. Directed by Ted Post. With: Anjanette Comer, Ruth Roman, Marianna Hill, Suzanne Zenor, David Manzy.

This is a bizarre tale of a horrid mother who takes a unique revenge on "all men" by raising her son to be a human vegetable in swaddling clothes. She prevents him from walking or talking, and outfitted in diapers, the young man (about 19 or 20) is left to languish in his crib—trapped amid the trappings of childhood. Enter the kindly social worker who quickly sizes up the situation and attempts to liberate poor "baby" from his mother and step-sisters.

As this synopsis indicates, Ted Post's film has a good many obstacles to overcome, yet this relatively minor, low-energy shocker is redeemed in large part by the performance of Ruth Roman, as the no-nonsense mother; Anjanette Comer, as the soft-spoken social worker; and Marianna Hill, as the step-sister who miraculously steps out of stereotype to display a complex character worth developing. Though a forced "twist" ending tends to cheapen all that has gone before, there are moments when these actresses express their frustrations with a look or gesture, suddenly suggesting the futility of stunted lives.

Robert L. Jerome



Mr. Spock & Capt. Kirk.

STAR TREK An NBC Weekly Series. Saturday morning. Premiere 9/8/73. 25 minutes. In Color. Produced by Lou Scheimer, Norm Prescott (Filmation Associates). Directed by Hal Sutherland. Based on the television series created by Gene Roddenberry. Story editor and associate producer, D. C. Fontana. With the voices of: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan, Nichelle Nichols.

The Star Trek universe, which has gathered an enormous following, is recreated in accurate detail by this cartoon series aimed at the Saturday morning kiddie audience. Thematically and conceptually, the cartoons achieve a level equal to that of the original series, but totally gone is the drama and human interest that made the live action series so captivating at times. In the animated version, all of the characters are as wooden-faced and expressionless as the emotionless Mr. Spock. Fascinating? No.

Primarily at fault is the show's technique of cartoon animation which keeps all movement to a minimum. We get static scenes of Kirk, Spock, McCoy and other crew members talking to each other, with only their lips moving and their eyes blinking away. Occasionally, the animators will allow Spock to raise an eyebrow, which in this show constitutes a highpoint in visual excitement. The static frames are imaginatively, often intricately drawn and composed, and would certainly suffice the comic-book medium, but there is no point to filming them.

The show has been touted as stimulating viewing for the tots, and of interest to adults as well. While true for those preoccupied in the study of the details which define the Star Trek universe, most, including the kids, will find it a terrible bore.

Frederick S. Clarke

IN SEARCH OF ANCIENT MYSTERIES An NBC Special. 1/31/74. In Color. 50 minutes. Produced, written and directed by Fred Warshofsky (Allan Lansburg Prods). Based on the book by Alan and Sally Lansburg. Narrated by Rod Serling.

This fascinating sequel to the equally fascinating NBC special *IN SEARCH OF ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS* captures the imagination mostly because producer/writer Alan Lansburg brings to it the wide-eyed enthusiasm of the convert. Having already produced the first show based on Erich von Daniken's two best sellers, *Chariots of the Gods* and *Gods from Outer Space*, Lansburg and his wife Sally went on to write their own book for the sequel. No doubt they were trying to capitalize on an idea that has caught on with the public like wildfire, but they believe what they're saying, and as a result both shows have been exciting, informative, dramatic and mind-boggling.

The theory that the earth was once visited by spacemen from another world and that mankind may have evolved from them is not new, but von Daniken popularized it and television has brought it to the masses. According to NBC, 345,000 copies of von Daniken's books were sold the first week following the broadcast of the first special. So, a sequel was inevitable. It covers much the same ground as the first program (air views of the trident at Pisco, the giant carvings on the plains of Nazca), but it also examines some additional amazing artifacts like the incredible 200,000 year-old Crystal Skull and a 700 year-old mummy with dentures. It doesn't succeed in proving its hypothesis any more than the first film did, just continues offering evidence, much of which is hard to swallow.

The phenomenal reception granted by the public to both Lansburg productions is a direct result not only of the content but of the style as well. Von Daniken's theory appeals to our hungry imaginations and our search for something to wonder at. Both are presented in the form of bizarre adventures into the twilight zone of unrecorded history, complete with Rod Serling as narrator and a chilling science-fiction-like score lifted from Maurice Jarre's soundtrack for *THE HORSEMEN*. This same style is sadly lacking in the current theatrical release, *CHARIOTS OF THE GODS*, based on the same material. For once television has surpassed the movies in providing a sense of wonder.

John McCarty

FANTASTIQUE

THIS IS YOUR LIFE A (British) Thames TV Network Telecast. 4/3/74. In Color. 30 minutes. Produced by Thames TV. Host: Eamonn Andrews. Guest: Christopher Lee.

The program began with a fencing display of particular skill and flair between William Hobbs, famed fight director, and Lee. The actor had been lured to the studio ostensibly to prepare for a segment of the children's television show called "Maggie." Then Eamonn Andrews steps forward gingerly and says: "Gentlemen, put aside your weapons. Timely rescue, Christopher, because... tonight, this is your life." Back at the show's set, in front of an audience, Lee watches the sequence and at fadeout, with Lee held at foil's point, remarks: "Outrageous conspiracy! I came out of it alive. I'm beginning to wonder whether I ought to have done." But with a twinkle in the actor's eye, it became clear that this program would truly reflect his dignity, humor and self-possession amid what must have been an overwhelming experience.

Lee's story was introduced with the latest highlight of his already illustrious career: the actor's presentation to the Queen Mother at the Royal Premiere of *THE THREE MUSKETEERS*, held on March 25, 1974. There followed a scene from the film in which Lee plays Rochefort opposite Charlton Heston's Richelieu. Heston could not be present for the show, but sent a filmed tribute to his co-worker. Another co-star from the film, Oliver Reed, delivered an amusing anecdote in person. It seems that Christopher, in earlier days at Hammer Studios, used to loan out his old white Mercedes and his own services as an opera-singing chauffeur for 5 - to his fellow actors. "It would be much more now," said Lee.

Lee's very attractive family were then brought on and introduced: wife, Gitta, mother, sister, and ten-year-old daughter, Christina, and so as not to make him feel too surrounded by women, his younger brother, Nicholas, had flown in from Johannesburg. Gitta, very beautiful in a flame and gold gown, recalled the time at Disneyland when Christopher went completely unrecognized for once. In response to a challenge from Robert Quarry who was with them at the time, Lee put on little Christina's Mickey Mouse hat and took up her teddy bear in his arm, all as a joke. But it was just enough to attract the eyes of passers-by, and suddenly the fans were crowding around the actor who now grinned out at them rather sheepishly under the teddy bear and ears. More family anecdotes followed in which Lee's link to the aristocratic Italian Carandini family was explained. Young Christina admitted to having seen her dad as the dreaded Count Dracula on television, but at night it's Donny Osmond that she dreams about.

Patrick Macnee appeared on film from Hollywood to recall his escapades with Christopher as young boys treading the boards in Shakespeare plays at Summerfield Preparatory School, Oxford, and how very surprised he was that with Christopher's obvious attributes of voice and meanness, he did not become a diplomat. "Ask my family or anyone who knows me..." Lee commented. Macnee ended by saying "I think he has an acting life beyond that which we have seen which is going to surprise and delight many people."

ple," referring to Lee's largely untapped potential as a performer.

Host Eamonn Andrews told how the family fortunes were to take a tumble a few years later, and Christopher had to leave Wellington College and take a job in the city, a messenger boy with a shipping line at a pay of one pound per week! A colleague from those days, John Lavall, recalled what they all looked forward to on pay-day, a three-course lunch for 1/6. "I remember the stamps I licked, too!" commented Lee. Buddies from his war days revealed that Lee's grasp of no less than five languages insured him posting as an Intelligence Officer with the 260th Fighter Squadron in the Western Desert, during which time he sported an R.A.F. type mustache and a dashing disregard for safety. He issued the following command to his driver when faced with enemy machine-gun fire: "As the senior officer in charge of this truck, I command you to drive straight on!" His ability to keep a secret had him sitting at the end of a runway for five hours, in a temperature of 100°F, in full flying kit, winter underwear, the lot—the victim of a hoax command from a bogus squadron-leader. Demobilized as a flight lieutenant, with a mention in dispatches, Lee's ambition was to make a career as an actor, but one of his first roles had him delivering the lengthy speech: "Lights!" in *HAMLET*. And Lee commented: "And I think I was one of about forty people who said it... in the dark!"

As the program covered the actor's rapid rise to fame from 1957 onwards, scenes from both *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *HORROR OF DRACULA* were shown, and colleagues were introduced: Peter Cushing, Veronica Carlson, Valerie Van Ost and Joanna Lumley ("The most attractive blood group in pictures" commented Lee about the latter three). Trevor Howard, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Vincent Price. Cushing described Lee's ability to do impressions and keep everyone amused at the ungodly hour of 6:30 a.m. "The story does go," said Peter, "that I first met Christopher in that make-up you just saw (*The Creature*) and at lunchtime, he took it off, and when he came into the restaurant, I screamed!" Trevor Howard, for his part, saw Christopher as another kind of demon—a demon bowler, during a cricket-match. Sammy Davis, Jr., sent in a filmed tribute from Hollywood, with reference to their co-starring in the TV film *POOR DEVIL*, and the close-knit relationship of their families.

A scene from *SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN* saw Christopher dealing masterfully with another great star of horror films: Vincent Price. Price had flown 8,000 miles from Hollywood to pay his respects in person. "It's a very peculiar thing," said Price, "I don't know whether it's supernatural or just perhaps ecological, but we share the same birthday, May 27th, a few years apart, of course, as Chris will always remind me." Price ended, in his inimitable style: "To a warm and wonderful human being and a master of his craft—what's your name?" The most memorable moment in the entire program came at the end, as Lee acknowledged the applause and appreciation of the audience. A wonderful life, with the promise of much, much more to come.

Dorene Hazell



Lyn Redgrave & Casper Jacobs.

THE TURN OF THE SCREW An ABC Wide World of Entertainment Segment. 4/15/74 and 4/16/74. 144 minutes. In Color and Videotape. Produced and directed by Dan Curtis. Screenplay by William F. Nolan from the novella by Henry James. With: Lynn Redgrave, Casper Jacobs, Eva Grifith, Megs Jenkins, James Laurenson.

Despite its videotape crudity, this ranks among the most literate and affecting of the Dan Curtis horror remakes. Scriptwriter William F. Nolan knows Henry James' work from the inside—which means he knows to place the ambiguities James was really writing about above the value of a shock. Two children may or may not see the ghosts which are trying to lure them away. A spinsterish governess' concern for them may be protective or possessive. We never know; particularly not at the end, when the menacing ghost of Peter Quint replaces the boy Miles in the governess' arms—questioning the resolution the drama had been moving towards all along. Nothing is ever what it seems between the governess and the children. Appearances so belie reality that each scene seems a set-up for, in James' governess' words, "the cruel idea that, whatever I had seen, Miles and Flora saw more."

A combination of horror story, psychological study, *The Turn of the Screw* is literature's most convincing proof that something can be learned from themes couched in so "disreputable" a form. Through its myopic heroine, the novella comments implicitly on all figures of authority for whom "the question of the return of the dead was forbidden ground," as it was for the governess. Miles and Flora are the original monster fans; their fascination with the ghosts works in everyone who enjoys a good horror tale, more deeply in those who feel the spiritual tremors James intended. Miles and Flora turn to the unknown with questions a spiritless Victorian society hasn't solved for them. Henry James' greatness lies in his implication of both worlds. And William F. Nolan understands.

Harry Ringel

THE KILLER BEES An ABC Movie of the Week. 2/26/74. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced by Howard Rosenberg, Ron Bernstein (R.S.O. Films). Directed by Curtis Harrington. Teleplay by Joyce and John William Corrington. With: Gloria Swanson, Edward Albert, Kate Jackson, Roger Davis, Liam Dunn, Don McGovern, Craig Stevens.

Ever since Alfred Hitchcock placed man at the mercy of *THE BIRDS*, horror filmmakers have jumped at the chance to top him. Not surprisingly, none have succeeded, a fact due mostly to their lack of perception. Hitchcock succeeded because he transformed an object of complete harmlessness into an object of menace, accenting the deadliness of the birds by increasing their numbers. On the other hand, if a person is already put off by bees (and most of us are), one bee is sufficient to provoke fear.

Quite obviously the producers of the film thought they had come up with an intriguing variation on Hitchcock's concept. In fact, the idea has almost been done to death, most recently (and just as innocuously) by Freddie Francis in *THE DEADLY BEES*. Here Gloria Swanson stars as the bizarre matriarch of a wealthy family, who fills her days cultivating hive upon hive of rare, ill-tempered bees imported from Africa. Enter Edward Albert as the prodigal grandson who has been dragged back to the smothering atmosphere of Swanson's bee farm by his fiancée, who wishes to meet the family before their wedding. Needless to say (though it does say something for the script's logic), it is not until Albert's return that the bees, after years of normalcy, decide to start killing everybody. Swanson herself is revealed as more than just a matriarch. In fact, she's a Queen Bee, and when she dies, Albert's fiancée is enlisted to take her place as the head of the hive.

The film contains no surprises, and on a technical level exudes the same polish as most made-for-TV movies. Gloria Swanson's part is so empty one wonders why she chose it for her television acting debut. I certainly can't imagine Norma Desmond saying yes to a grade-B Bee movie like this!

John McCarty



Christopher Lee, surrounded by family and fellow performers on *THIS IS YOUR LIFE*.



John Saxon, Janet Margolin, Ted Cassidy and Christopher Cary in Roddenberry's *PLANET EARTH*.

KILLDOZER An ABC Segment of Suspense Movie. 2 2 74. In Color. 75 minutes. Produced by Herbert F. Solow (Universal TV). Directed by Jerry London. Teleplay by Theodore Sturgeon. Ed MacKillop, adapted by Solow from the novella by Sturgeon. With: Clint Walker, Carl Betz, Neville Brand, James Wainwright, Robert Ulrich.

The news that ABC Suspense Movie was going to present a special adaptation of Theodore Sturgeon's novella "Killdozer" filled me with anticipation. Sure the network was trying to duplicate the success of *DUEL* by unearthing an old story with a similar concept (machine vs. man), but the bare possibility that in their search for bizarre subject matter the made-for-TV movie moguls might "discover" and use the boundless resources of Theodore Sturgeon was exciting indeed. Unfortunately, the novella, magnificently written and far superior to *DUEL*, has been turned into a far inferior movie. And Sturgeon has probably been consigned back to oblivion.

The main character of Sturgeon's story was the bulldozer itself. Suddenly invaded by a wandering force from the stars in search of a powerful host, it is transformed into a marauding machine. So vividly does Sturgeon describe the dozer that by the end of the story it does seem like a living thing. The teleplay on the other hand abandons the bulldozer and the crew's pressing deadline to complete a world war two landing strip on a remote Pacific island to concentrate on the stock motivations of its equally stock characters. Clint Walker, wooden as always, stars as the disliked construction boss, determined not to let his boat with booze lose him a second and last chance to prove himself on the job. Carl Betz is his chief antagonist. Their relationship, how they come together to come to terms with the killer machine is the ho-hum core of the teleplay. It is neither Sturgeon's story nor insightful drama; even the action scenes are sluggish.

Only once does the film manage to recreate some of the story's unique charm. Hearing a purring noise in the dead of night, one of the crew members (James Wainwright) investigates, spotting the monstrous hulk perched like a dozing giant on a hillside. Sensing his nearness, the machine's headlights scan the bushes in the manner of an animal perking up its ears; then the beast roars into action. And that, in short, is what Sturgeon's novella was all about. Considering he did share screen credit for the teleplay, Sturgeon must have had something to do with the film version stripping most of its gears. But I sincerely hope (and suspect) it was as little as possible.

John McCarty

Carl Betz & Clint Walker & Killdozer.



PLANET EARTH An ABC Tuesday Movie of the Week. 4 23 74. In Color. 75 minutes. Executive producer, Gene Roddenberry. Produced by Robert Justman. Teleplay by Roddenberry and Juanita Bartlett from a story by Roddenberry. Directed by Marc Daniels. With: John Saxon, Janet Margolin, Diana Muldaur, Ted Cassidy, Christopher Cary, Jo De Winter, Sally Kemp, Claire Brennan, Majel Barrett, James D. Antonio Jr., Corrine Camacho, Sarah Chaitin, John Quade, Raymond Sutton, Rai Tasco, Aron Kincaid.

The never-say-die spirit of producer Gene Roddenberry is to be commended. Since the demise of *STAR TREK* (as a live-action series), the energetic science fiction enthusiast has produced a batch of TV pilots which have featured attractive, sometimes talented performers in imaginative scripts that, by and large, emerged as mindless Saturday afternoon thrillers for the undemanding. This, Roddenberry's latest installment, is his most juvenile and, curiously, most satisfying as a piece of escapist fiction.

John Saxon appears as the tried-and-true earthling projected into the 22nd century where he and some comrades invade a colony of hostile Amazon women to locate a missing scientist. To the warrior women, especially majestic Diana Muldaur, Saxon is just a slab of beefcake, but with the aid of his faithful Dale Arden (Janet Margolin), Saxon overcomes his female opponents and finally restores their faith in masculine strength by rescuing them from an army of marauding mutants.

Comic book stuff, to be sure, and we're not certain how the format would have fared as a weekly series, perhaps, like a steady diet of Milky Way bars, it would have been to childish to digest regularly. Still, we don't want to discourage Roddenberry from trying again. He might get a good idea.

Robert L. Jerome

SCREAM OF THE WOLF An ABC Segment of Wednesday Movie of the Week. 1 16 74. In Color. 75 minutes. Produced and directed by Dan Curtis. Teleplay by Richard Matheson based on the story "The Hunter" by David Chase. With: Clint Walker, Peter Graves, Jo Ann Pflug, Philip Carey, Don Megowan, Brian Richards, Lee Paul, James Storm, Dean Smith, Randy Kirby, Bonnie Van Dyke, Orville Sherman, Grant Queens, Vernon Weddle, William Baldwin, Douglas Bungert.

Having already mined most of the other traditional sources of cinefantastique, it seemed inevitable that TV's Dan Curtis would eventually turn his attention to the werewolf. Well, the result isn't another *THE NIGHT STALKER*, but it does offer at least one new plot twist.

In its opening moments the film looks about as traditional a genre piece as can be. The moon is full. Off screen we hear a wolf howling. The next morning a body is discovered, clawed and mutilated beyond recognition. Pawprints trail away from the corpse, then miraculously disappear. "Sheriff, do you believe in werewolves?" "That's superstitious nonsense!" For a change the sheriff is eventually proven right, a twist which may have dismayed some traditionalists hoping for another tired transformation scene at fade-out. But anyway, that's not the twist I'm referring to.

Richard Matheson's script is actually a character study, a rather adult one, for Curtis and for TV. Peter Graves is a writer who has been enlisted by the sheriff to lend his skills as a former professional hunter in tracking down the "killer." Against his wishes, Graves is urged to seek additional help from an old colleague and friend, Clint Walker, who is still a professional sportsman. Walker refuses for mysterious reasons: he likes seeing the community in turmoil, wrenched from its complacency by the impending smell of death. Eventually it turns out that Walker himself has been creating the "wolf killings" as a ruse to drag the prodigal Graves back into his macho world. In fact, Walker is obsessed by his former relationship with Graves, bringing up homosexual inferences that are quite clear and

become even more pronounced as the film goes on. After an ill-fated attempt to scare Graves' girlfriend (Jo Ann Pflug) into running away, Walker comes to realize that he'd rather lose his former buddy to a bullet than to a typewriter and a girl. Or so it seems. Actually he works the final showdown around so that Graves must kill him, thereby returning Graves at last back to the fold. Arms spread, Walker charges Graves, almost as if to embrace him for the bullet which will bring a suitably macho end to his homosexual dream.

Not scary, but quite interesting. And the casting of Clint Walker was inspired!

John McCarty

TERROR ON THE BEACH A Segment of The New CBS Tuesday Night Movies. 9 18 73. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced by Alan Jay Factor (20th Century-Fox TV). Directed by Paul Wendkos. Teleplay by Bill Swane. With: Dennis Weaver, Estelle Parsons, Susan Dey, Kristoffer Tabori, Scott Hylands, Michael Christian, Henry Olek, Roberta Collins, Carole White, Betsy Slade.

The very talented Paul Wendkos directed this ludicrous parody of a bizarre thriller in such a way as to mock the whole ridiculous affair. A family is inexplicably terrorized by a Manson-type gang out for kicks, and the conservative father eventually takes matters into his own hands (shades of *STRAW DOGS*). There are a couple of stylish moments, as when the father discovers a body floating in the water that turns out to be a dummy, and when Susan Dey lusciously emerges from the trailer in a skimpy bikini to the lustful eyes of two young men. Wendkos' camera almost seems to rape her. Otherwise, this is a boring, laughable mess, in which the filmmaker's distaste for the material is clearly evident.

Dale Winogura

THE QUESTOR TAPES An NBC Wednesday Night At the Movies. 1 23 74. In Color. 100 minutes. Produced by Howie Horowitz. Directed by Richard A. Colla. Teleplay by Gene Roddenberry and Gene L. Coon from a story by Roddenberry. With: Robert Foxworth, Mike Farrell, John Vernon, Lew Ayres, Dana Wynter, James Shigeta, Robert Douglas, Majel Barrett, Ellen Weston, Reuben Singer, Fred Sadoff, Gerald Sanderson Peters, Walter Koenig, Edythe Girard, Alan Caillou.

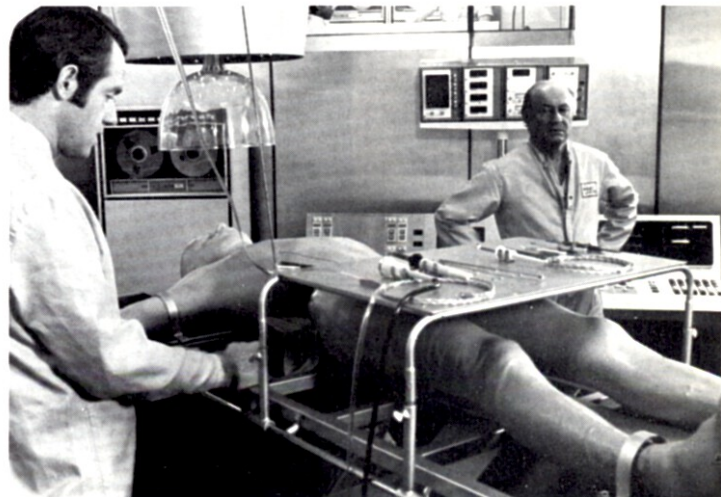
This unsold pilot made in early 1973 is a variation on the time-honored science fiction story concept of *We Are Property*, a favorite plot of Roddenberry's, to judge from the number of times it was used on *STAR TREK*, both as pertaining to our own planet and to alien worlds. This entry centers around an android rather coyly named Questor, the last of a series of self-perpetuating mechanical guardians of the human race which were visited upon us thousands of years ago by some unspecified civilization out yonder. All this time the generations of androids have been gently shepherding the human race along the right lines, a concept which many people find rather obnoxious.

Questor has been faultily programmed, with the tapes pertaining to his origin, mission, and his capacity for human emotion, erased. The plot centers upon his search for this information, in the company of a human engineer sidekick with the unfortunate comic-book name of Jerry Robinson. Robinson, played by Mike Farrell, gives an outstanding performance, and the scenes between he and Questor, portrayed by Robert Foxworth, are the best in the show. Too often, however, Farrell is not given support in his poignant scenes, and segments that should have been affecting are made to look faintly silly.

Production values are surprisingly shoddy, performances often declamatory, and motivations and plot twists murky in this off-hand-looking effort from Universal, usually noted for its willingness to give a quality budget to quality science fiction. Which perhaps tells the story.

Kay Anderson

Mike Farrell and Robert Douglas prepare to activate Questor in *THE QUESTOR TAPES*.



Cathy Lee Crosby.

WONDER WOMAN An ABC Segment of Tuesday Movie of the Week. 3 12 74. In Color. 75 minutes. Produced by John Stephens (Warner Bros. TV). Directed by Vincent McEvety. Teleplay by John D. F. Black based on the National Periodicals comic book character. With: Cathy Lee Crosby, Kaz Garas, Ricardo Montalban, Andrew Prine, Anitra Ford, Jordan Rhodes.

For the children of the forties, Wonder Woman fulfilled a specific need. Sexier than Batman and almost as strong as Superman, she was "the" super-heroine of her age, far and away superior to her nearest female rivals (Sheena the Jungle Queen and Miss Fury). Now, coming to life perhaps twenty years too late, the Amazonian Champion of Justice resembles a mod secret agent rather than a reassuring fantasy figure twirling her golden Magic Lasso. Cathy Lee Crosby appeals for more pizzazz than poise. Yes, she can throw a javelin with skill, yet she can't quite hurdle the banalities of a Saturday Morning script which goes from A to B in routine fashion. If her Diana Prince is less princely than we have a right to expect, there is some compensation in the smooth pourings of villainy supplied by Ricardo Montalban, as the suave Mr. Evil, and Andrew Prine, as his nasty, sweaty-palmed underling. It all has the look of a TV pilot for a projected series, but on the basis of this uninspired installment, the video future of the mythical lady from Paradise Isle looks in doubt.

Robert L. Jerome

LISA, BRIGHT AND DARK An NBC Segment of Hallmark Hall of Fame. 11 28 73. 75 minutes. In Color. Produced by Tom Egan. Directed by Jeannot Szwarc. Teleplay by Lionel E. Siegel based on the novel by John Neufeld. With: Anne Baxter, John Forsythe, Kay Lenz, Anne Lockhart, Jamie Smith Jackson, Debralee Scott.

This poignant tale of a high school girl who goes bananas, is essentially *THE EXORCIST* minus the supernatural overtones. Kay Lenz is terrific in her performance as a young girl fearful of her own compulsive behavior and mutating personality as it grows beyond her control. Here is the film Friedkin pretends to have made when he calls *THE EXORCIST* the story of a girl with a disease for which there is no name. Is Lisa possessed? Certainly, but not by a demon, by a mental illness beyond everyone's understanding including her own, a prospect perhaps more disturbing than the devil.

Frederick S. Clarke

LM RATINGS

FILM RATINGS

THE RATINGS

++++ High +++++
 +++ +++++
 ++ +++++
 + +++++
 0 Average 0
 - - - - -
 - - - - - Low - - - - -

TOP RATED FILMS

THE CONVERSATION (3.6)
 THE EXORCIST (2.9)
 DAY OF THE DOLPHIN (2.1)
 THE PARALLAX VIEW (2.1)
 ZARDOZ (2.1)
 MAN ON A SWING (2.0)

Only films seen by four or more participants are given an average rating. Of 72 films currently in release, only six listed above received an average rating of +2.0 or better.

THE RATERS

BW = Bill Warren
 DB = David Bartholomew
 DRS = Dan R. Scapperotti
 DW = Dale Winogura
 FSC = Frederick S. Clarke
 JM = John McCarty
 RLJ = Robert L. Jerome
 TL = Tim Lucas
 Av. = Average Rating

ARNOLD

"Absolutely rotten black comedy. Good opening and nice work by McDowell, but ultimately forced, unfunny, boring, amateurish and sloppy. Pure trash." (DW, -4)

BLOOD FOR DRACULA

"Previewed at the Atlanta Film Festival. Better than ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN, not as perversely cynical. Scene with Roman Polanski is a gem! And Dracula's demise is unbelievable!" (JM, +1)

CHOSEN SURVIVORS

"Perhaps the glossiest television reject ever made. Perfect casting. Despite excellent suspense direction, the film never loses its aura of being utterly ridiculous. The genre piece to see after a beer party!" (TL, -3)

CRUCIBLE OF TERROR

"After a promising pre-credit start, the film deteriorates into a dull mystery plot until the final minutes when the supernatural aspects come to light. Mike Raven is bad as usual." (DRS, -1)

DEAD OF NIGHT

"Deliciously satisfies a masochistic desire in the American psyche for pain and retribution for the crimes of Vietnam. A grisly, macabre tale, worthy of the revered reputation of its namesake." (FSC, +3)
 "A soldier, killed in action, comes home under his own power. Sleeper potential!" (TL, -2)

THE DEVIL'S TRIANGLE

"Inept documentary, much stock footage. Narrated by Vincent Price, who can't read anything anymore without it sounding like a bloated Poe passage." (DB, -2)
 "On a par with CHARIOTS OF THE GODS, except that it fails to explore the theories and concepts it raises." (JM, 0)

GOLDEN NEEDLES

"Beautifully stylized, superb acting by Baker, Ashley, and Meredith, cleverly plotted; weak transitions, obviously cut down, sometimes awkwardly." (DW, -2)

THE GROOVE TUBE

"Inconsistent, sophomoric, but clever, sometimes hilarious TV satire. Nice takeoff on 2001 at the beginning." (DW, -2)

"Has all the weaknesses of the very media it satirizes. Infrequently inspired, particularly in a rotoscoped animation sequence." (FSC, +1)

FILM TITLE	BW	DB	DRS	DW	FSC	JM	RLJ	TL	Av.
ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN (Paul Morrissey) Bryanston, 6/74, 95 minutes, color, scope & 3-D	-	0	+	----	---	----	+	---	-0.2
ARNOLD (Georg Fenady) Cinerama, 4/74, 94 minutes, color		+		----		----	0	++	-1.0
BABY, THE (Ted Post) Scotia Int'l, 8/74, 85 minutes, color				+			++		
BAT PEOPLE, THE (Jerry Jameson) AIP, 3/74, 94 minutes, color					---		0	++	
BEAST MUST DIE, THE (Paul Annett) Cinerama, 4/74, 93 minutes, color & scope	+	-		---				++	-0.2
BLAZING SADDLES (Mel Brooks) Warner Bros, 2/74, 94 minutes, color & scope	++	-	+	++	+		---	++	+1.4
BLOOD (Andy Milligan) Joseph Kent, 8/74, 74 minutes, color.					----		-	0	
BLOOD FOR DRACULA (Paul Morrissey) Bryanston, 8/74, 91 minutes, color				0		++		----	
CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER (Brian Clemens) Paramount, 6/74, 91 minutes, color	++	+	+	++	++	++		---	+1.9
CASTLE OF FU MANCHU (Jess Franco) Int'l Cinema Corp, 8/74, 81 minutes, color & scope	-	---	0		-		-	-	-1.5
CHOSEN SURVIVORS (Sutton Roley) Columbia, 5/74, 99 minutes, color		0	-		---	0		---	+1.0
CONVERSATION, THE (Francis Ford Coppola) Paramount, 4/74, 113 minutes, color	----	---		---	----	----	---	----	+3.6
CRAZE (Freddie Francis) Warner Bros, 7/74, 96 minutes, color		---	+						
CRUCIBLE OF TERROR (Ted Hooker) Yordan Prod, 10/74, 91 minutes, color				-					
DARK PLACES (Don Sharp) Cinerama, 5/74, 91 minutes, color		0							
DAY OF THE DOLPHIN (Mike Nichols) Avco-Embassy, 12/73, 104 minutes, color	---	0	++	++	----		+	---	+2.1
DAY THE EARTH MOVED, THE (Robert Michael Lewis) ABC-TV, 9/18/74, 72 minutes, color	0		---						
DEAD OF NIGHT (Bob Clark) Europix Int'l, 7/74, 88 minutes, color					---			++	
DERANGED (Jeff Gillen & Alan Ormsby) AIP, 5/74, 82 minutes, color	+	0		++				-	+0.5
DEVIL'S TRIANGLE, THE (Richard Winer) UFO Dist Co, 10/74, 52 minutes, color		---		0		0			
DICBY, THE BIGGEST DOG IN THE WORLD (Joseph McGrath) Cinerama, 6/74, 88 minutes, color	++	++		+	++	0	+	+	+1.3
DON'T LOOK NOW (Nicholas Roeg) Paramount, 1/74, 105 minutes, color	+		+	---	+		+	----	+1.8
DRACULA (Dan Curtis) CBS-TV, 2/74, 104 minutes, color	++	---	---		0	----	+	-	-1.0
EXORCISM'S DAUGHTER (Rafael Morena Alba) Nat'l Forum, 9/74, 97 minutes, color					----		0		
EXORCIST, THE (William Friedkin) Warner Bros, 12/73, 121 minutes, color & scope	0	---	++	----	----	---	---	----	+2.9
FANTASTIC PLANET (Rene Laloux) New World, 12/73, 72 minutes, color	---	+		++	++		+		+1.8
FLESH GORDON (Michael Benveniste & Howard Ziehm) Mammoth, 7/74, 82 minutes, color	-	-	---	0	---				-0.6
FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL (Fisher) Paramount, 6/74, 93 minutes, color	---	-	0	0	0	-		++	+0.3
GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD, THE (Gordon Hessler) Columbia, 3/74, 105 minutes, color	---	0	++	++	+	++	++	-	+1.6
GOLDEN NEEDLES (Robert Clouse) AIP, 7/74, 90 minutes, color & scope	0	+		++	+		+		+1.0
GROOVE TUBE, THE (Ken Shapiro) Levitt-Pickman, 6/74, 71 minutes, color	+	0		0	+			---	+1.0
HERBIE RIDES AGAIN (Robert Stevenson) Buena Vista, 7/74, 90 minutes, color	+	-	++	----	+		+	++	+0.3
HOMEBODIES (Larry Yust) Avco-Embassy, 7/74, 97 minutes, color								---	
HORRIBLE HOUSE ON THE HILL (Sean MacGregor) Barrister-Cinematation, 8/74, 90 minutes, color								----	
HOUSE OF THE SEVEN CORPSES, THE (Paul Harrison) Int'l Amusements, 1/74, 90 minutes, color	---	++							
HOUSE THAT VANISHED, THE (Joseph Larranz) AIP-Hallmark, 9/74, 95 minutes, color	-				-	0		0	

FILM RATINGS

FILM RATINGS

FILM TITLE	BW	DB	DRS	DW	FSC	JM	RLJ	TL	Av.
INTERNECINE PROJECT, THE (Ken Hughes) Allied Artists, 7/74, 90 minutes, color				o		o		..	
ISLAND AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD (Robert Stevenson) Buena Vista, 12/74, 93 minutes, color & scope			o						
IT'S ALIVE (Larry Cohen) Warner Bros, 10/74, 91 minutes, color	o			..	o				
JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL (Hall Bartlett) Paramount, 12/73, 101 minutes, color & scope				+++	..		o		
LAST DAYS OF MAN ON EARTH, THE (Robert Fuest) New World, 8/74, 78 minutes, color								+++	
MADHOUSE (Jim Clark) AIP, 3/74, 89 minutes, color		*	..				*		+0.8
MAN OF THE YEAR (Marco Vicaro) Universal, 4/74, 108 minutes, color								----	
MAN ON A SWING (Frank Perry) Paramount, 2/74, 109 minutes, color	..	+		+++	+++	+	-	+++	-2.0
MEMORIES WITHIN MISS AGGIE (Gerard Damiano) Inish Kae Ltd, 7/74, 74 minutes, color			*	o	..		*		+1.0
MUTATIONS, THE (Jack Cardiff) Columbia, 6/74, 91 minutes, color	-	-	*	+	--	---		---	-1.1
MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF CAPTAIN NEMO (Colpi & Bardem) Cinerama, 6/74, 107 minutes, color & scope			o	----			o		
NIGHTMARE HONEYMOON (Elliot Silverstein) MGM, 7/74, 86 minutes, color					---		o	+	
NINE LIVES OF FRITZ THE CAT (Robert Taylor) AIP, 6/74, 76 minutes, color		o	o	---	..		o	+	0.0
NORMAN NURDELPICK'S SUSPENSION (Bob Dahlin) Nurdelpick, 7/74, 32 minutes, 16mm black & white					..	----			
PARALLAX VIEW, THE (Alan J. Pakula) Paramount, 6/74, 103 minutes, color & scope	+++	++	++	++++	-	+++	+	+++	-2.1
PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE (Brian De Palma) 20th Fox, 12/74, 91 minutes, color	++++	+							
PHASE IV (Saul Bass) Paramount, 8/74, 91 minutes, color & scope		o	..				++	+++	+1.2
RHINOCEROS (Tom O'Horgan) Am Film Theatre, 1/74, 104 minutes, color	--	+		----			++	o	-0.6
ROBIN HOOD (Wolfgang Reitherman) Buena Vista, 12/73, 83 minutes, color	..	o	+	++	o	++	+	++	+1.2
SEXORCISTS, THE (Louis Garfinkle) Capital Prod, 7/74, 94 minutes, color								--	
SEXUAL WITCHCRAFT (Beau Buchanan) Anon Rel Triumvirate, 8/74, 65 minutes, color			-	---	----				
SHANKS (William Castle) Paramount, 10/74, 93 minutes, color		o	+	+		----		++++	+0.5
SHEBA (Don Chaffey) Fanfare, 10/74, 90 minutes, color							o		
SLEEPER (Woody Allen) United Artists, 12/73, 88 minutes, color	+++	+++	..	+	-	+++	++	++	+1.9
SON OF DRACULA (Freddie Francis) Cinematron, 4/74, 90 minutes, color					--				
STRANGER WITHIN, THE (John Moxey) ABC-TV, 10/1/74, 72 minutes, color	o			+		--	o		-0.2
SUGAR HILL (Paul Maslansky) AIP, 2/74, 90 minutes, color			..		o		o	--	0.0
SWORD OF VENGEANCE, Part 6 (Yoshiyuki Kuroda) Toho, 9/74, 84 minutes, color & scope, titles				+					
TERMINAL MAN, THE (Mike Hodges) Warner Bros, 6/74, 107 minutes, color	--	++		++	++	o	+		+1.0
TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE, THE (Tobe Hooper) Bryantson, 10/74, 90 minutes, color	..	--			+				
TOUCH OF SATAN (Don Henderson) Dundee Prod, 3/74, 87 minutes, color		-			..		o	--	-0.2
UFO TARGET EARTH (Michael A. DeGaetano) UFO Dist Co, 10/74, 80 minutes, color		-				----		+	
W (Richard Quine) Cinerama, 6/74, 96 minutes, color		-					+		
WATCHED (John Parsons) Penthouse Prod, 9/74, 93 minutes, color		+							
WHO? (Jack Gold) Allied Artists, 12/74, 93 minutes, color		-				o			
ZARDOZ (John Boorman) 20th-Fox, 3/74, 105 minutes, color, scope & stereo	+++	++	o	++++	++++		+	++	-2.1

HOMEBOODIES

"An exquisite black comedy shot in Cincinnati. Familiar cast of elderly character actors and actresses get even with a construction tycoon that has their tenement building destroyed to make way for a skyscraper." (TL, +3)

THE HOUSE THAT VANISHED

"Fairly standard tale of psycho knife killer. Tits and blood." (DB, -2)

ISLAND AT THE TOP OF THE WORLD

"Poor special effects and pedestrian performances make for unconvincing fantasy-adventure." (DRS, 0)

IT'S ALIVE

"A real sick, repulsive film. Teasing, cheating, inept suspense tactics. A good idea ruined by pretentious handling. Good score by Bernard Herrmann." (DW, -2)

"This tale of a mutated, newborn baby, a powerful, murdering monster, is constantly on the brink of laughability, but is too gruesome to laugh at. Wasted potential." (FSC, 0)

THE LAST DAY OF MAN ON EARTH

"Excellent film version of Michael Moorcock's *The Final Programme* shall be regarded as among the best combinations of science fiction and fantasy in all of cinema. Superb accomplishment. Wow!" (TL, +4)

MAN OF THE YEAR

"A masturbatory fantasy set in Italy about an Italian with three testicles. Terribly dull, terribly overlong, terrible. Full of phallic and testicular symbolism." (TL, -4)

MEMORIES WITHIN MISS AGGIE

"So-so psycho/porno. Fine photography and editing, weak script and direction, uneven acting, often pretentious, not very erotic." (DW, 0)

"Stunningly bizarre and warped visual surface overcomes unoriginal scripting. Wistfully beautiful score is a tremendous asset." (FSC, +2)

THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND OF CAPTAIN NEMO

"A dubbed dud, talky and slow, with Omar Sharif's Nemo pretty much zero." (RLJ, 0)

NIGHTMARE HONEYMOON

"Fresh faces plus stale script equals failed thriller." (RLJ, 0)

"The first genre piece from the director of CAT BALLOU is interesting viewing fare. Originally to be directed by Nicholas Roeg, the picture reeks of his own moods." (TL, +1)

NORMAN NURDELPICK'S SUSPENSION

"On-target, beautifully paced Hitchcock parody. The PSYCHO shower scene had me in laughing fits." (FSC, +2)

PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE

"Fantastic! Will probably be the hit of the year." (BW, +4)

"An elaborately conceived, meaningless movie. It says, expresses and does nothing. A crock of gold-plated shit." (DW, -1)

THE SEXORCISTS

"Formerly entitled BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, and copyrighted 1970. Almost insightful. Almost. New opening and closing scenes have been tacked on starring Satan." (TL, -2)

SEXUAL WITCHCRAFT

"No joke, this is hardcore porno, lousily developed in every way. A waste." (DW, -3)

SHANKS

"Alternately dumb and clever. Technically sloppy (at first I thought it was intentional). That it is all a murderous fantasy lets everyone off the hook. Too bad." (DB, 0)

"Some lovely, lyrical moments in this, one of Castle's better films. Spotty black comedy with some fine touches and a superb job by Marcel Marceau." (DW, +1)

SHEBA

"A nasty (in an unflattering sense) shocker with Lana Turner on one of her clothes-horse binges as a mean Mom who rides her son (Ralph Bates) unmercifully until the worm turns and... Tyburn's first film." (RLJ, 0)

SWORD OF VENGEANCE, Part 6

"Supernatural vs. samurai film, beautiful photography, unevenly directed and written, but some fine moments. Very gory as usual, but not up to the best in the series." (DW, +1)

THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE

"One of the damndest films ever made. I'm sorry someone felt impelled to make it, but as long as they did, Hooper did an excellent job. The violence itself is not extreme, but the tension, atmosphere and thrills are extremely powerful." (BW, +2)

UFO TARGET EARTH

"Overwritten hilariously—too many ideas and none developed. Some of the opticals are pretty." (DB, -1)

WHO?

"Borderline science fiction based on a novel by Algis Budrys about an American scientist in an auto accident who is re-built by East European scientists, a quasi-cyborg. Pretty dull stuff except for Joe Roa who manages to give a good performance under the metal face." (JM, 0)



continued from page 6

Swan was a cut-out that was moved across glass, animated essentially. When Mike came back he wanted to reshoot it using front projection. We were going to build a front projection rig, but the person who was to build it couldn't get himself together, and we were running out of cash, so we decided not to reshoot it. At that point I did a few effects myself, and in the end the Swan sequence wound up being a combination of Dennis' work, Mike's work, and my work.

CFQ: What locations were used during the filming?

ZIEHM: The live action interiors were shot at Bronson Sound Stages, Producers Studio in Hollywood. The outdoor stuff was shot in and around Griffith Park. The observatory in the film was Griffith Park Observatory. The effects were shot at several studios I set up for the effects people. We had an operation at an abandoned venetian blind factory, at Eagle Rock, California. We converted it into a studio. In general the film was shot around the Hollywood area.

CFQ: What problems arose during the editing stage?

ZIEHM: Originally, Mike Benveniste was going to edit the film. He cut the first rough assembly, and told me it was in shape enough to have a little screening. We'd told everybody about the film, and we had high hopes for it. Most of the animation wasn't in yet, but we held the screening anyway, and it was a big disappointment. I'll never forget that evening. I was in a cold sweat, not knowing what to say to people. So the next morning I had to fire Mike Benveniste, which was sort of unfortunate. After I fired him, I walked out of the office and that's when we got busted. The whole world collapsed for me that Saturday morning. From this stage to completion a guy named Abbas Amin took over the editing. The film had been edited incorrectly to start off with, and everything was broken into little rolls, very hard to find, so it made re-editing much more difficult than it should have been. As Abbas started putting the film together, weaknesses in the script started showing up. We were forced to do some pick-up shots, and add some effects here and there. Just little transitions to smooth things out. Also, editing in both 16mm and 35mm made the job cumbersome. We were first reducing the 35mm to 16mm, then editing. When we had cut the picture properly, the 16mm footage was blown up to 35mm for release printing.

CFQ: Were any scenes scrapped in the editing stage?

ZIEHM: No, nothing really significant. We cut some sight gags that just didn't work. But basically we kept everything we shot. We just tightened it up here and there.

CFQ: How is the film doing at the boxoffice?

ZIEHM: Very well. We have it booked at a Cinema 5 theatre and it is pulling the biggest crowds of any of the Cinema 5 theatres in New York. It's grossed \$50,000 in the first two weeks. It's such a crazy, unique film that I think we'll always have playdates. I think we're going to do okay with it.

CFQ: Can we expect a sequel to the film in the near future then?

ZIEHM: Maybe. But I'm thinking more in terms of another spoof, or doing a new comic character.

I feel I've gotten a tremendous edu-

Top: Jason Williams as Flesh Gordon. Middle: Suzanne Fields as Dale Ardor, surrounded by handmaidens on her visit to the Forest Kingdom of Prince Precious and his Merry Men. Bottom: William Hunt as Emperor Wang, the Impotentate of the Planet Porno. Hunt co-authored the film's original screenplay with co-director Mike Benveniste.

Top: The great god Porno with Dale Ardor in his grasp. Unlike most animated monsters, the great god is liable to mouth an obscenity or two as he rips off the heroine's clothes. If nothing more can be said of FLESH GORDON, it opens fresh new vistas to the stagnating field of model animation effects. Bottom: The beetle-man advances to do battle with Flesh in a sequence which parodies the famous skeleton swordfight from Ray Harryhausen's THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD. The model was fabricated by Rick Baker and constructed by Bill Hedge from the designs of George Barr. The sequence is animated by Jim Danforth who also executed some striking matte paintings.

cation in special effects in the past three years. I payed for that education by suffering through the ups and downs of this film, and I feel I am now capable of putting together a much more organized production. And if someone tells me a monster takes a week to do, I know he's full of crap. That's the kind of thing that was told to me at the beginning of this project. So sometime soon there will be another project; and it won't take three years, either.

CFQ: Does FLESH GORDON succeed as you hoped it would when you first began?

ZIEHM: Yes, but as I said, when we went into this we were new to the field. I'd be the first to say the film could be better, in just about every area. But I feel relieved that audiences find it entertaining, that it does have merit. I feel very pleased with it, on the whole.

CFQ: Will your future films be of a prono nature, or will you move into other areas?

ZIEHM: I have a philosophy about those other areas. I look at them and it seems to me that they are all losing money. You have egos clashing right and left, you have backers to worry about, unlike my own experience so far. The films I've done, with the exception of FLESH GORDON which got a little out of hand, have all been done under congenial atmospheres. They were fun to do, and have always made money. Of course, I would like to improve the quality of my films, and not do just sex films, but I like the idea of doing things that are outrageous, whether it's sex, or politics, or whatever. I went to MIT for three years, and I quit because I saw a hum-drum existence working for some company designing pencil sharpeners, or something equally drab, as my fate when I graduated. I'll probably do something outrageous again in film in the near future.

CFQ: Will your next project involve special effects?

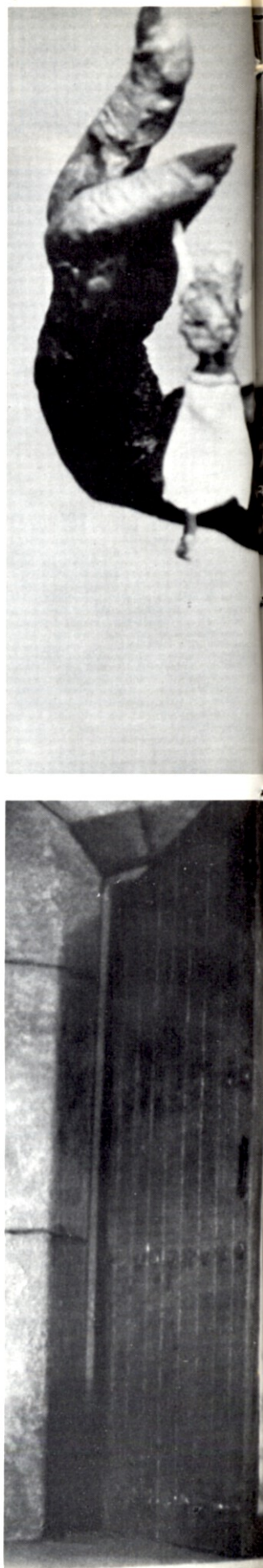
ZIEHM: Definitely! If FLESH GORDON does well, I'd love to work with Jim Danforth again. Him, Tom Scherman, the whole crew.

CFQ: FLESH GORDON should succeed. It's the first really imaginative use of model animation in a long time.

ZIEHM: That's how we felt. It has a wide appeal and not just for the science fiction buffs either. People aren't coming to see the monsters, they're coming to be entertained, to laugh, and they're leaving the theatre satisfied.

After our interview with Howard, the three of us walked back to the screening room, where Peter Locke was unspooling the last ten minutes of FLESH GORDON. On the screen Wang's palace on the planet Porno was being systematically demolished. Miniatures that had taken months to build were being destroyed in seconds, and Howard whispered that very irony to me as we watched. Howard Ziehm is new to the world of *cinéfantastique*, but if his first venture into the realm of fantasy is any indication, he'll be making many more future contributions to the genre.

OCFQO



NEWS AND NOTES

SENSE OF WONDER

Welcome to the twelfth issue of CINEFANTASTIQUE (sin-eh-faun-tass-teek'), the magazine with a "sense of wonder," devoted to the examination of horror, fantasy and science fiction in the cinema. Cinefantastique, as a film genre, is healthier and more prolific today than ever before. And just as our nation faces perhaps the most troubled political, economic and social upheaval in its history, the movie industry as a whole is experiencing better times than at any point during the past decade. People, in the grip of economic unsurity, fearful of losing their jobs and perhaps even the cherished American way of life itself, are cueing up at the boxoffice of their local movie house in ever greater numbers to be shocked and jolted by the horrors of a comparatively safe and secure fantasy world in which they know they can come to no real harm. How else can one explain the fairly recent American lust for torture, bloody dismemberment and a Grand Guignol realism in film fare—something previously isolated to a small body of cheap films made for an equally small, perhaps disturbed, audience—except in terms of its being a shock treatment to calm gnawing inner fears and disquietude. In the past, devotees of films depicting bloody mutilation and disfigurement such as those of director Herschell Gordon Lewis—i.e. BLOOD FEAST, 2000 MANIACS, THE WIZARD OF GORE, et. al.—were considered sick. What can be the judgement now of these films when our society as a whole demands their like in entertainment. Is the public's newly discovered fascination for eye gouging and amputation to be considered a symptom of sickness in our society as a whole, and if so, is our morbidity a sign of passing delirium or the first stages of social dissolution? Can the public's preoccupation with films such as THE EXORCIST, THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE, ANDY WARHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN, etc. be mitigated by the fact that the blood and gore is now being well-done? Perhaps. In any case, we are now temporally too close to gain enough perspective to judge the matter, but I think there can be no doubt that films, and particularly films of our genre, are accurately reflecting the mood of the country and the people. The tenor of the times is reflected more generally in the cinema by the public's sudden interest in films portraying cataclysm and mass death, the so-called "ark" pictures, including EARTHQUAKE and THE TOWERING

INFERNO. Siegfried Kracauer wrote a classic volume of film criticism called From Caligari to Hitler in the late forties which traced the psychology of the German people that led to Nazism in the films, many of them horror films, of that period. A corresponding volume which could conceivably illuminate the story of the past 14 years might be called From Psycho to Nixon.

David Bartholomew and Dale Winogura provide our feature article this issue by examining "THE EXORCIST: The Book, The Movie, The Phenomenon." As Bartholomew points out in his introduction tracing the film from its novelistic beginnings to its overwhelming reception by the general public, as few films ever do, THE EXORCIST has made history. He also makes the observation that most critics, in skewering the film for its shocking violence, have mistakenly treated the film as disease and not symptom. Accompanying interviews with the film's director, William Friedkin, and actor Jason Miller, who plays Father Karras in the film, were conducted by Dale Winogura in Hollywood. Dale writes: "I hope they will serve as a useful and perhaps invaluable guide to a deeper understanding of the picture. I believe THE EXORCIST to be the finest genre film made in America. Perhaps the one great symbol of the film is that magnificent two-shot of Father Merrin and the statue of Pazuzu in the desert, which graces the article. It epitomizes for me the infinite mystery of the film, and its timeless wonder." In discussing his film, Friedkin concludes: "It has a lot to say to future generations, if only on a historical basis." Bartholomew interviews Dick Smith, the make up artist on the film, from a different angle, discussing the creation of the film's makeup and effects on a technical basis. The discussion reveals that a great deal of work previously credited to special effects technicians is actually the work of Smith and his make-up techniques. We thank director William Friedkin for giving us permission to publish here-to-fore prohibited makeup photos, and Dick Smith for providing the material from his files. This special article on THE EXORCIST, perhaps the greatest horror film ever made, coincides with its first anniversary. We're confident that in the years to come it will continue to be regarded, like 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY, as a milestone in the evolution of cinefantastique.

Mark Carducci and Douglas Olson provide an interesting look behind the production of FLESH GORDON by interviewing its producer and co-director, Howard Ziehm. As our faithful readers will recall, we published a short feature on the film's production early in 1972 in our Vol 2 No 1 issue. The film itself never materialized, until now, and Ziehm reveals exactly why it took three years to produce a pornographic special effects movie. Rumors concerning the film have been rampant. As Ziehm himself remarks: "There was an animosity that grew slowly between all of us as we worked on the picture. My partner, Bill Osco, was driving a Rolls Royce and I was telling people I couldn't afford to pay them." We hope to publish a future article to delve more fully into the film's production, particularly as concerns the creation of its special effects. If nothing else can be said in the film's favor, it at least provides a breath of fresh air to the stagnating field of model animation special effects.

Finally, Steve Rubin takes a Retrospect look at THEM!, a classic of cinefantastique, and in discussions with its director, Gordon Douglas, and its screenwriter, Ted Sherdeman, examines the milieu of the studio system during the fifties, and finds the stupidity, short-sightedness and lack of creativity we always suspected must be there.

DARK STAR

A terribly funny satire on spacemen, space movies, companionship, and steely nerves under pressure.

DARK STAR A Jack H. Harris Release. 12/74. 83 minutes. In Metrocolor. Executive producer, Jack H. Harris. Produced and directed by John Carpenter. Original screenplay by Carpenter and Dan O'Bannon. Director of photography, Douglas Knapp. Assistant director, J. Stein Kaplan. Sound, Nina Kleinberg. Production designed and edited by Dan O'Bannon. Music by John Carpenter. Spaceship design, Ron Cobb. Miniatures, Greg Jein and Harry Walton. Title sequence paintings, Jim Danforth. Animation, John Wash and Bob Greenberg.

Doolittle Brian Narelle
Talby Andreijah Pahich
Boiler Carl Kuniholm
Pinback Dan O'Bannon
Powell Joe Sanders

Top: The scoutship *Dark Star* is surrounded by a red emergency force field as it moves through a dangerous electromagnetic storm in outer space. Bottom: Orbiting around the planet of an unstable sun, *Thermostellar Bomb #20* emerges from the bombay doors of the *Dark Star* in preparation to detonate. The special effects in *DARK STAR* were designed and supervised by Dan O'Bannon and were produced on a very modest budget.

On the surface, *DARK STAR* is a terribly funny satire on spacemen, space movies, companionship, and steely nerves under pressure. In other words, all eventually goes haywire. Underneath the amazingly slick, professional exterior is a very messy movie, messy by choice and not by default. There is a casual charm to the film's variety of invention, punctuated by moments of pure and spontaneous laughter that make it an instant camp classic of sorts. Although much of the visual humor is organic to the structure, the feeling is still one of a pasted together comic book that's mockingly sophisticated, with sloppy, pointless continuity.

The story, which is not the point here at all, involves the crew of an interstellar scoutship of the future, on a mission to detonate and explode suns that are about to go super-nova. Dan O'Bannon, who co-authored the script, edited the film miraculously to make one believe it's a smoother job than it really is, just as his witty performance in the film adds greatly to its dimension. His diary scene is brilliant, shifting from one emotion to the next with astounding smoothness and conviction.

The directorial style of John Carpenter, working on his first feature film, is tight, smooth, and cleverly expressive of the claustrophobic confinement and mental disintegration of the spacemen. He mingles comedy and dramatic elements with a sense of timing that is rare in science fiction films, sometimes going from one extreme to the other with remarkable virtuosity. The scene where O'Bannon is trying to contain an irresponsible alien aboard the ship, a beach ball with claws, at times goes too overboard for laughs, but Carpenter manages to balance it with serious undertones. The sequence in which one of the spacemen goes outside the ship to talk the nuclear bomb out of exploding is beautifully sustained in tension, with a thin veneer of comic hysteria, and Carpenter's pulsating moog score compliments it perfectly.

DARK STAR is episodic and rambling, but it hangs together quite remarkably because the people who made it worked hard and cared about what they were doing. Technically and visually the film is gorgeously professional and tremendously exciting, aided by a superb blow-up job from 16mm to 35mm. The use of bright reds and blues, and drab whites, is extremely effective and amusing in the film's context. Doug Knapp's photography is also pro work, as finely, delicately lit and shot as any major Hollywood product. Most of the film's faults in the long run are counterbalanced by its often striking virtues and amazing achievements.

Dale Winogura

DARK STAR could be the science fiction sleeper of the year. With a total budget of \$60,000, made over a period of 3 1/2 years, this little film fulfills my earlier prediction of becoming a good, class combination of science fiction, satire, outrageous comedy, action and adventure. I made that prediction when *DARK STAR* was just an ambitious short film being shot in 16mm by two students at USC (see Vol 2 No 3, page 4). When I learned that it had been picked up for commercial distribution by Jack H. Harris Enterprises, I got in touch with the film's director, John Carpenter to talk about it.

At 26, Carpenter is a young director by Hollywood standards and *DARK STAR* is his first feature. At USC he made eleven student films, including editing and music work on the Academy Award winning short film *THE RESURRECTION OF BRONCHO BILLY*. Originally from Bowling Green, Kentucky, he attended college at Western Kentucky University and then at the Cinema Department at USC. In addition to producing, directing and co-authoring the script of *DARK STAR*, Carpenter also composed and performed the film's musical score, which consists of a witty combination of country music and eerie moog vibrations.

CFQ: How did *DARK STAR* progress from being a \$6000 student film shot in 16mm to a \$60,000 35mm feature film in commercial release?

CARPENTER: Very slowly. At one point during production of the short version we were approached by investors who saw commercial potential in what we were doing. They offered to put up some money if we would expand to a feature. The opportunity was an attractive one because of the amount of control I could maintain over the picture. In essence, they gave me the money and left me alone. After completing the feature we shopped around for a distributor. Jack Harris made us an offer and we accepted.

CFQ: When you began *DARK STAR*, what was your original concept?

CARPENTER: Essentially, I envisioned the picture as an adventure in outer space, and not so much as a comedy. We were influenced a lot by *DR. STRANGELOVE* and, of course, 2001. The comedy elements just developed out of the situation.

CFQ: In the beginning, did you have any definite ideas on the style of the film?

CARPENTER: I wanted to make a picture that would be a definitive work of my own style, of my own way of telling a story. My experience in film school allowed me to work visual excesses out of my system. I began to realize certain important things about telling a story and communicating with an audience.

Howard Hawks is a director that in-

fluences me greatly. I've studied a lot of his movies and the way he tells a story. What impresses me about Hawks is his sense of environment, atmosphere and mood, and the tension he wrings from it. This is something I try to achieve in my pictures.

When you have characters interacting, you want the atmosphere to heighten everything. When you direct, you are presenting your point-of-view of the world. It was these considerations that determined the style of *DARK STAR*.

CFQ: In what ways do you see your film as differing from the many low-budget B films that have emanated from Hollywood?

CARPENTER: In intent and style. Our concern was not so much with a gimmick (a monster, a trick environment, an unusual menace, a utopia, etc) as it was with a dramatic situation. A cornerstone of the B-picture is a rather straight-ahead, get-it-done attitude. This, incidentally, is what makes the B-picture so good. The best B-pictures tell a story and show a lot of action. They cannot afford any excess baggage. *DARK STAR* is an episodic picture, laconic at times, full of diversions and asides. The plot is often undercut by episodes, and the rhythm reduced.

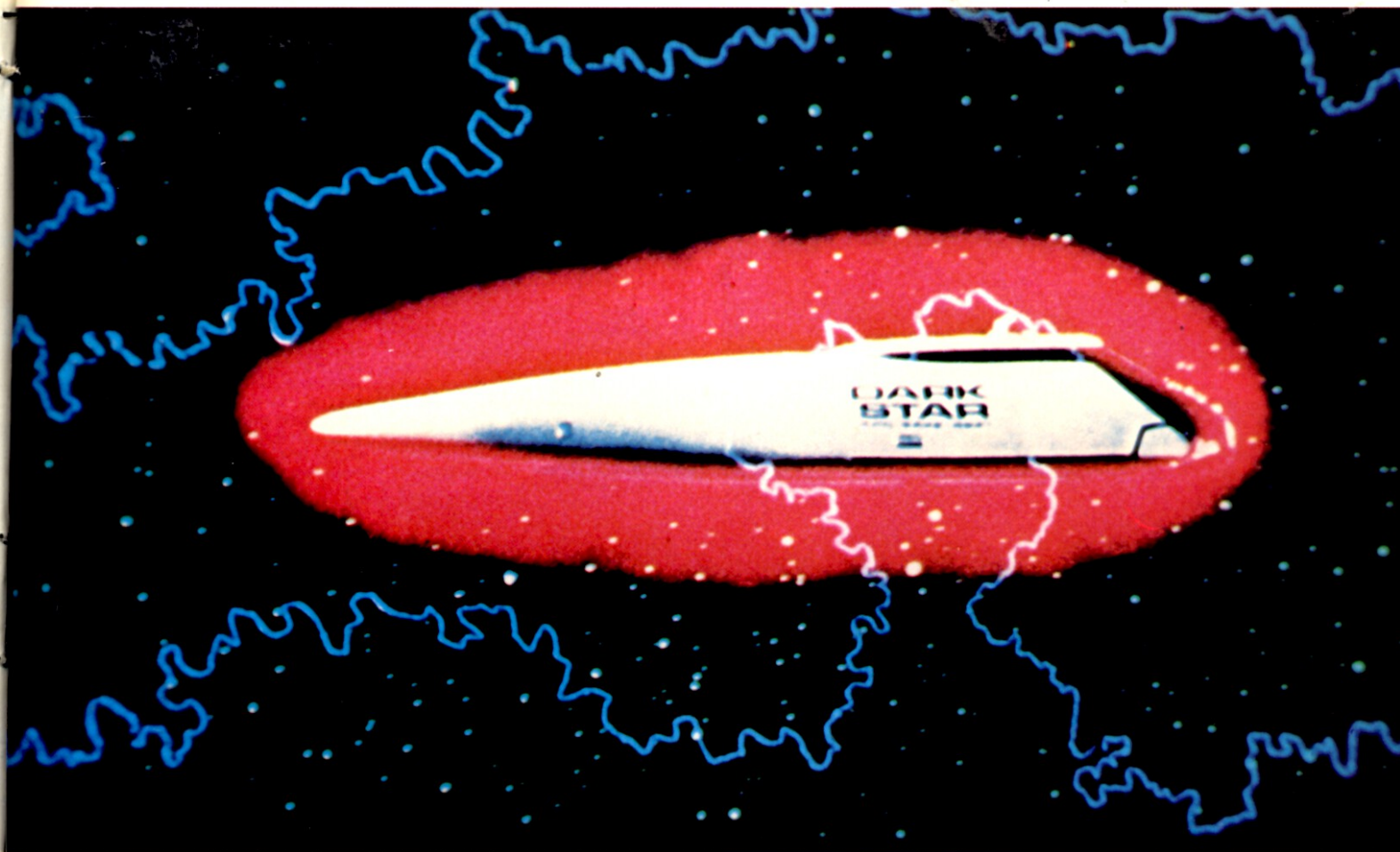
The style of *DARK STAR* in its visuals, lighting, cutting, and music is, I feel, more planned and controlled than in most low-budget films. Style is as much a part of the picture as the conventional dramatic elements: plot, structure, characters, etc. The emphasis in *DARK STAR* is not so much on getting from A to B but what it's like getting there.

CFQ: What were the artistic problems that you had to face and overcome in making the picture?

CARPENTER: Proper pacing for the film was the biggest problem for me. I think pacing is the life and death of a motion picture. If your pace doesn't fit your subject, and you don't lead your audience, you're going to lose them. In *DARK STAR* I was just as concerned with the men as I was with the action. I was interested in the way they reacted to what they experienced. Establishing the mood inside the ship was a big, big problem—how to come into a scene correctly, how to set up a mood, how to block out the movements between the men and machines. Having made the picture over a number of years made it even more complicated because I had to go back and re-acquaint myself with the previous footage before we could shoot anything else.

Getting the characters defined was a big problem, giving each of them their own direction and personality. I failed to do this with some of the characters. I'm very happy with the way O'Bannon worked out his character, Pinback, and with Doolittle (Brian Narelle). The

Interview
conducted
by
Dale
Winogura





Top: Producer/director John Carpenter (right) consults with second unit cameraman Cliff Fennman during filming of the computer room sequence shot at a computer systems simulation laboratory. 2nd: Pinback (Dan O'Bannon) is trapped on the underside of an elevator, hanging on and dangling into the open elevator shaft beneath. 3rd: Pinback tries to coax the ship's pesky alien mascot back into its room with a rubber mouse. Bottom: The alien mascot, a beachball with claws. Pinback takes firmer action and attacks it with a broom. **DARK STAR** is currently in national release from independent distributor Jack H. Harris Enterprises.



others were full of unrealized possibilities. I was also concerned with bringing the machines to life. The computer and the thermosteller bombs are characters just as the men are. They had to be treated cinematically in a way that would make them come alive.

CFQ: What is behind the continual references to the deceased Commander Powell in the beginning?

CARPENTER: At the start, Dan O'Bannon and I conceived of the film as a *Waiting For Godot* in outer space. In that theatre-of-the-absurd play, the characters keep talking about Mr. Godot and when he's going to appear that day. At the end of the play someone arrives and says he's not going to be coming today, and to come back tomorrow. We used this concept by having the men constantly referring to Powell, and giving the audience the idea that this man was somehow the reason behind their mission, a guiding force. Even in death (which has occurred before the film opens), they still speak of him reverently, almost as a god, as someone who's guiding them, giving some kind of meaning to their mission. This is eventually realized in his appearance at the end of the picture.

CFQ: The scene with the ship's alien mascot, a beachball with claws, really doesn't fit in well.

CARPENTER: The original idea we had was to have the men seek out intelligent life in the universe, in addition to their other duties. I wanted to pay tribute to all those old, cheap science fiction films that I love dearly. We thought of a specimen room in the ship, with hundreds of forms of life, like a psychedelic zoo, where one of the men would have to go in and feed the animals. The cost of such an idea was prohibitive, so we cut it down to one alien mascot, the beach ball with claws. We wanted something that would be funny and obviously not a real monster.

I liked Dan's character and felt he didn't have enough to do in the picture. I also like to have physical action in a picture as much as psychological development. We came up with the scene in which O'Bannon nearly falls down the ship's elevator shaft first and then figured a way of tying the alien into it. It was a departure from the story and thrust of the film, but I wanted to have some fun in the middle of the picture.

CFQ: How did you go about filming this scene?

CARPENTER: The elevator shaft was built on a sound stage, about 80 feet long. It was horizontal. We turned the camera on its side and shot both sideways and upside down. When you see him dangling from the elevator, he's merely lying on a platform sticking his feet up to appear like he's in danger of falling. The elevator itself was a crab dolly with a piece of masonite in front of it, painted silver. You only see the bottom of it.

CFQ: The diary scene is one of my favorites. How did it develop?

CARPENTER: That scene was very well scripted, except for a couple of entries which we did on the spot. Dan and I have a very good working relationship as actor and director. We can

communicate quickly, and once we got his character down pat, we had a lot of fun with it. That is one of my favorite scenes, too.

CFQ: The relief we feel when Doolittle succeeds in talking the computerized bomb out of exploding is a beautiful set-up for the explosion that occurs shortly thereafter. It's a perfect extension of the absurdities we've seen in the rest of the film.

CARPENTER: That's the idea. If you can take the audience to the point where they believe an astronaut convinced a bomb that it cannot tell fantasy from reality, after that you can do anything. Just as long as you keep it moving so the audience doesn't have time to flag, you can get away with it. During the scene while Doolittle is talking to the bomb, there is a fight between Boiler and Pinback in the control room and subsequently down the corridor. We added that later to complicate the tension even more. I'm happy that we pulled it off as well as we did. Much of the writing of the scene was Dan's, and I thought it was very good.

CFQ: How did you handle your actors?

CARPENTER: I wanted the performers to underplay to give a sense of realism. Aside from that, the most important aspect was casting the right person, with the right physical and emotional characteristics, and making sure I get across what it is I want in the character. I believe in an acting approach based on gesture and expression.

CFQ: What trends do you see developing in the science fiction film genre in the seventies, and what do you feel has prevented the genre from becoming a popular cinematic form?

CARPENTER: Science fiction has become much more seriously intentioned and, unfortunately, much more pretentious. Much like the Western during the fifties and sixties, science fiction pictures like *THE TERMINAL MAN*, 2001, *A CLOCKWORK ORANGE*, *SILENT RUNNING*, and even the flatusous ones like *SOYLENT GREEN* pretend to greater themes. Of course, this parallels the similar development of science fiction literature in which there are two general trends, the novels with social-religious themes and the novels that are purely escapist-adventure.

With obvious notable exceptions, the science fiction film, like the Western, appeals to a specific segment of moviegoers. Many people simply do not enjoy seeing science fiction pictures. In terms of the people who make pictures, actors, directors, producers, science fiction is neglected because it is almost always very expensive and no one wants to take a back seat to the gimmicks.

CFQ: Are you pleased with **DARK STAR**?

CARPENTER: It's awfully hard to look at it objectively now. There's always something I want to change. Basically, I'm very pleased with the way the film turned out. I think it's pretty obvious that this is my first feature film as a director. There's a lot of inexperience and youthfulness in it, which I hope will mature. I am gratified by those things in the picture that I pulled off well. The film allowed me to use the science fiction genre to explore personality, which was one of my intentions.

CFQ: Do you have any special interest or desire to work within the science fiction genre?

CARPENTER: I feel special affection towards science fiction/horror films. I grew up with them and love to watch them. It was their influence that led me into a career of directing pictures. However, the genre doesn't hold an exclusive position in the types of pictures I want to do. There are too many other stories to be told.

CFQ



COMING

THE HEPHAESTUS PLAGUE is an upcoming William Castle production for Paramount Pictures release, to be directed by Jeannot Szwarc, a regular contributor to the Rod Serling teleseries **NIGHT GALLERY**. Thomas Page adapted his own novel for the screen, a tale involving the attempt of scientists to control the breeding of foot-long, carbon-eating, incendiary cockroaches that emerge from a fissure in the earth following a severe earthquake...

LEGEND OF THE WEREWOLF is the third Tyburn Film Production, now filming in England. Their first film, **SHEBA**, a psychological horror film with Lana Turner and Ralph Bates is already receiving some U.S. playoff. Their second, **THE GHOUL**, has not been picked up for U.S. release. The current production stars Peter Cushing in a screenplay written by former Hammer contributor John Elder. The film is directed by Freddie Francis and produced by his son, Kevin, who is the driving force behind Tyburn, a company actively involved in production during a deeply felt depression in the British film industry. The company has several properties by Elder for filming...

LORD GRAYSTOKE is being written by Robert Towne for producer Stanley Carter, based on the Tarzan novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Towne is noted for his screenplay for Roman Polanski's **CHINATOWN**...

ROLLERBALL is the name of a lethal competitive sport played in a future world controlled by huge corporations, a story being filmed for United Artists release starring Academy Award winner John Houseman, James Caan and Sir Ralph Richardson. Producer/director Norman Jewison is filming in England from a screenplay by William Harrison based on his story originally published in **Esquire** magazine...

SINBAD AT THE WORLD'S END will be a followup film to the financially successful **GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD**. Ray Harryhausen will act as co-producer and write the film's original story from which Beverly Cross will complete the screenplay. Cross collaborated with Harryhausen previously on the screenplay for **JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS**. Producer Charles Schneer again packages the deal for release by Columbia Pictures. Production is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 1975...

WASTED ON THE YOUNG has been acquired for filming by Bud Yorkin Productions. The science fiction novel by Ralph Schoenstein dealing with our society's obsession with youth will soon be published by Bobbs-Merrill. The author is writing the screenplay...

Top: Roy Holder is seized by a prehistoric monosaurus in **THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT**, an Amicus film production for release by AIP in March of 1975. The film, based on the novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs, features large mechanical models of prehistoric creatures designed by Maurice Carter. Bottom: Peter Cushing, during filming of **THE GHOUL** for Tyburn Films, holds photographs of himself and his late wife Helen when they were young, props involved in the film's story. No U.S. distribution has been set.



BIBLIO-FANTASTIQUE

In his book **A Heritage of Horror** (Gordon Fraser, London, 1973, 192 pages), David Pirie falls between two critical schools: auteur theory on one hand and an analysis of genre and ideology on the other. At times he combines the two, but all too often he abandons his analysis at precisely the point where it is becoming new and valuable. Particularly revealing is his discussion of **ENEMY FROM SPACE** which he approaches from an ideological standpoint, drawing comparisons between the events in the film and the political situation in the mid-1950s (science fiction is ideal for this, provided one goes beyond the themes to the ideology they purvey, something rarely done). Pirie points out that the film is "powerfully subversive," but from which direction? One could certainly maintain that a film which shows the Government of the day being controlled by invaders is subverting the right-wing theory of natural authority and the power of the ruling class. One could also maintain—and the same goes for **INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS**—that such a film is a warning against foreign domination which, in the 1950s, can mean nothing other than an anti-Communist cold-war tract. The call for vigilance is an old right-wing ploy. Pirie is falling into the liberal trap of attacking evils in society from a standpoint that is so vague and based on a number of so highly ambiguous ideological themes that the resulting film can be interpreted along completely opposing and contradictory lines.

Pirie is at least aware of this possibility and says in the concluding lines of the book, where he is clearly advocating using **cinéfantastique** ideologically: "I am aware that, in adopting such a course for the horror movie, there is a terrible risk that directors less skilled than Siegel and Romero will assail us with the interpolation of half-baked political material into contrived horror plots. But I think on the whole the risk is worth taking, for it is essential that horror and fantasy, which are the most powerful cinematic metaphors we have, should continue to be meaningful." I would maintain personally without hesitation that the majority of the most interesting and valuable films produced in Britain since the war are connected with **cinéfantastique** in the widest sense. The problem with what Pirie says, however, is that, until we have directors willing to undertake analyses that do not embrace ambiguity because the makers are ignorant of how and why society functions ideologically and how its artistic products reflect that ideology, then the danger of meaninglessness will triumph. Pirie has not solved the problem critically in **A Heritage of Horror** because he is torn between conflicting critical standpoints. It is significant that, apart from his analyses of Gothic literature, the best pages of his book are devoted to the consistent themes and stylistic approaches of Terence Fisher and, especially, Michael Reeves, without any real attempt to go beyond this to the implications and values present. Basically, I think Pirie took on far too much in this book, at least in the space available. Nevertheless, despite the inadequacies and the inability to push arguments through to their conclusions, Pirie has thrown up enough ideas to enable critics to begin a serious reevaluation of vast areas of unexplored territory. For that alone, his undertaking is invaluable.

Reynold Humphries



YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN

Mel Brooks talks to Dale Winogura about the filming of his black and white ode to James Whale.

It was to his roomy yet modestly decorated office at 20th Century-Fox that Mel Brooks invited me for what he likes to call "vocal ping-pong." Brooks is an extremely likable, very expressive man, with an exuberance and wit that makes him a pleasure to be with. It will be a trifle insulting for me to admit my surprise in also finding him to be a highly intelligent and perceptive filmmaker.

In 1963, Brooks won an Oscar for his witty cartoon short *THE CRITIC*, a satire of avant-garde movies and their critics. His first feature film, *THE PRODUCERS*, won him wide acclaim and a second Oscar (Best Original Screenplay) in 1968. He has also written and directed *THE 12 CHAIRS*, a cult favorite that unfortunately failed with the general public, and last year's *BLAZING SADDLES*, a western film satire that has proven to be his greatest commercial success.

YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN was developed with his frequent collaborator and star, Gene Wilder, and is an affectionate satire of the Universal horror films of the '30s, specifically those of James Whale.

Left: Young Frankenstein (Gene Wilder) beckons his newly born creation (Peter Boyle) to take its first step into the world. Top: Gene Wilder and his lab assistant Inga (Terri Garr) are greeted at the ancestral estate of his late father by Frau Blucher (Cloris Leachman). Middle: Terri Garr supervises a lab scene right out of *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLFMAN*, including the Kenneth Strickfadden electrical effects. Bottom: Terri Garr and Igor (Marty Feldman) watch as Gene Wilder becomes captivated by the notes describing the experiments of his father. These color scenes are print-through the courtesy of Mel Brooks who insisted upon filming *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN* in black-and-white to retain the look and visual mood of the old horror classics.

CFQ: Could you explain the genesis of *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*?

BROOKS: Gene Wilder called me, and told me his agent said, "I'd love to have you do a picture with another client of mine, Peter Boyle, and Marty Feldman. Is there anything you guys could do together? The 3 Stooges or something?" Gene said, "I don't know. It's a good idea, let me think."

Gene said to me, "Can you think of anything for us?" I said, "I don't know, I'm in the middle of *BLAZING SADDLES*." Gene said, "I've got an idea. How about *YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN*?" I said, "What the hell is that?" He said, "Well, I become the monster, and he becomes me." I said, "Wait a minute. You've got a great idea here. Peter is a natural monster, you are a natural, hysterical leading man, and Marty was born to play Igor. Maybe we can get a blond laboratory assistant with big tits, and maybe we can get Madeline Kahn as your New York fiancée, who's a 'not-on-the-lips' type."

Then we began working. Gene did most of the physical writing, and we would meet every ten days with about ten pages, and go over what we had and where we wanted to go. I wound up committed to both writing and directing it. We kept working for about seven months, and every moment I could spare from *BLAZING SADDLES*. It was really fun. It's the best way to write. I couldn't wait to get to the next scene, and get it down.

We showed it to Peter and Marty, and they just flipped. They thought it was glorious. We wanted to do it in black-and-white and that nearly blew the deal. Both the factor of black-and-white and the budget blew it away at Columbia, and 20th Century-Fox took it. But 20th also did not want it in black-and-white, and we said, "No. Take it or leave it. If it's not James Whale, it will be a Hammer film, and we're not interested in that kind of blood-thrill."

I love Japanese and Italian films. On the old "Show Of Shows" on television, I used to make fun with them, not at

them. I'm doing the same thing on a much more esoteric and exotic basis on **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN** with the horror films of the '30s. They are cinematic masterpieces.

CFQ: During the writing of **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**, did you find yourself adding or eliminating gags?

BROOKS: We did both. Some scenes were too filled with business, joke, and shtick, and we cleaned them out like weeds. Some were deadly because they were vocal ping-pong, and so we had to add, but they had to be added thematically, within the given situation and environment. Generally, as we went along, we eliminated gags.

Script is 90% of any venture, it's number one—solid characters, good words. Next is casting, the people to take the ball across the number one yardline and score a touchdown, and only the best can do it for you.

I have a three-week trial cruise before shooting. I take the crew, and we meet every day, and go from page 1 to 120. Every department raises their hand and says, "What do we do here?" I'm very highly organized, so that we know every day exactly what we should accomplish, and what is needed to accomplish it, both artistically and technically. We plan every move, every camera angle. I don't use a zoom in the middle of shots so that you notice it. I don't intrude as a director. I use very, very slow zooms in **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**. I emulate trucking shots because they did not have a zoom in 1931, and I don't want it to be a zoom.

CFQ: In *Whale's* horror films, there are some flashy, angled camera and editing touches in the lab scenes.

BROOKS: *Whale* was doing that to gain the "equipment rhythm" I call it. I couldn't do that because that would be making fun of it, and it would be too obvious.

CFQ: What is your basic stylistic and thematic concept of the film?

BROOKS: The concept is a larger-than-life presentation. It has to do with Man's dream of being God. One aspect of it is the outrage of Man in God's defying him. It's also about womb-envy, and the mob's ignorance and fear of genius. So it becomes a very Promethean work.

The look and the feeling is German Expressionism. It's a salute to James Whale and the wonderful directors of the past, and that beautiful black-and-

white look. It's done in the Reinhardt school: shafts of light, huge castles diminishing the human being. But, I didn't "super-duper" it. I like to keep the backgrounds as simple and firm as I can, so they're hard walls to bounce comedy off of. If the background is soft and frivolous, like the comedy up front, then you have nothing working against it, no juxtaposition of textures, so to speak. It's almost Chagall-ian in its concept. You leave the ground and swoop backwards.

CFQ: It seems that thematically you are going back to the book rather than the films?

BROOKS: Oh, yes. I want it to be a spectacular and rich (visually and philosophically) entertainment that would house the comedy. It should be funny, thrilling, moving, and touching. There should be cheers at the end if we've done the right thing, and I think we have.

CFQ: Will your use of backgrounds be as bright and flashy as in **BLAZING SADDLES**?

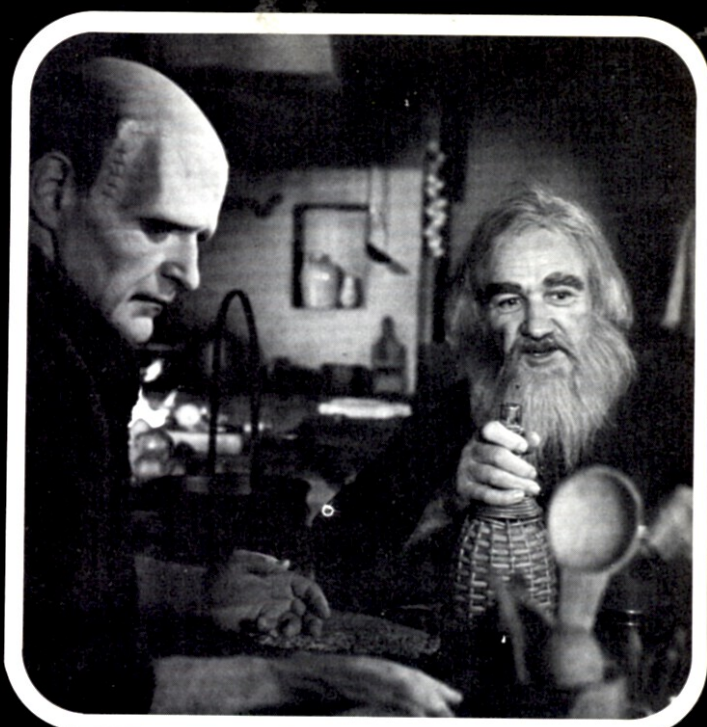
BROOKS: Generally, backgrounds will be muted. Occasionally, they will be incredibly bright, in cataclysmic, cataleptic, and catafantastic scenes like "the creation," where things have to be almost dead black and dead white, with very few grays. There are three or four of these big, insane scenes, "anchor scenes," such as the creation scene, and what I call the monster's melancholy disenchantment awakening of being a fool, of being used by his creator. You can't do a picture without anchoring it.

I don't want to be safe. I don't want to just "get on base." I was born to strike out and challenge God, or hit an insane home run for all of us. Art should challenge the authority of God, it should go that far, and see whether or not we are worthy of the name, Man.

CFQ: But you love happy endings?

BROOKS: Yes, I do. I like triumph. I don't like defeat. I think an unhappy ending is a defeat over a period of two hours. I try to make the comedies Protean, muscular, robust, and real. Lesser artists will use an unhappy

Below: During the "creation" scene, Mel Brooks lines up a camera angle with cinematographer Jerry Hirschfeld. Brooks calls the films of James Whale "cinematic masterpieces."



Above: Peter Boyle is befriended by an old hermit who is blind, played by Gene Hackman. Brooks' comedy is often melancholy in timbre, and the scene loses none of the pathos of the original.

ending, thinking it's Art. A true artist like Fellini or Bergman will always have a happy ending.

CFQ: You try to soften the violence in your films.

BROOKS: The audience never feels the pain because I always take the curse off it if I can. I don't like pictures in which people are in pain.

CFQ: Were you influenced in **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN** by Von Sternberg's visual style?

BROOKS: There was a subliminal influence, in slow camera drifts, almost imperceptible sometimes. I didn't drift as much as I "moved in" on characters very slowly. The camera should always move a little bit in a long dialogue scene, and Von Sternberg did that exquisitely.

CFQ: Are you improvising on the set?

BROOKS: Only with the actors, never with the camera. It's better if the technicians are rehearsed so that the move is smooth. The one thing you don't want to do in an old-fashioned film is make a rude move. That's a very new concept—rude camera behavior. I like the genteel camera of the '30s very much. That does not interfere, but supports action and thought on screen. Even when *Whale* used crazy angles, it's just to support the intensity of the scene, it's never intrusive. The other camera device I used was a star filter in two scenes, and only when women are on camera, to give them highlights. Everybody used that. It's really Busby Berkeley more than anybody when I think about it.

CFQ: How would you define your approach to comedy?

BROOKS: Comedy is like a piece of fruit. Think of a tree, the earth, the roots, and the majesty of that creation. Comedy is the fruit, the end product or the by-product. Without those roots going deeply into the soil, there is no comedy. Comedy does not work in a fruit store, that's what some comedy filmmakers would have you believe. I hope that my comedy is hanging intact on the tree. It's the logical extension of human behavior, just as a pear is

the logical extension of the bow on the tree. That's the image that I think best describes the kind of comedy I'm after. It is organic—the end product of a greater design.

CFQ: Where, in particular, did you improvise on the film?

BROOKS: There's a sequence on the steps of the castle when Madeleine Kahn arrives. We rehearsed it once, and found so many things that we just let it go, and it was simply hysterical.

CFQ: How did you work with Peter Boyle in his first comedy?

BROOKS: One of the images I gave Peter was, "You've a newborn baby. You've never heard music before. When you hear the violin for the first time, playing that haunting lullaby, you will think of those notes as little butterflies, and you'll try to pluck them out of the air. That will give us a very innocent and melancholy picture." It's absolutely exquisite, and very, very moving.

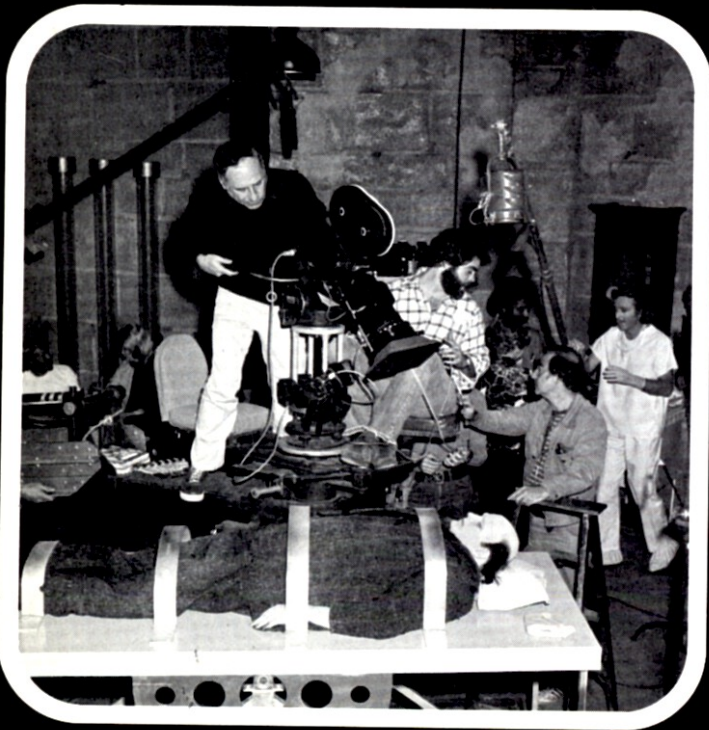
CFQ: Do you have any favorite films that are science fiction?

BROOKS: **THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL** is perhaps my favorite science fiction film. It was a wonderful blend of imagination and social philosophy. The most dazzling, cinematically speaking, is Kubrick's **2001**—it's a giant. Its philosophy is rather abstruse; it deals with whether or not there is a Supreme Being. The inner storyline, which unfortunately turns out to be the subtext, is whether HAL will win over the two astronauts. That gives it a nice, good old-fashioned sense of melodrama. The larger aspects are really a little more thrilling.

CFQ: There's a definite melancholy aspect to your comedies, which is true of most really great comedies.

BROOKS: True. I try to keep it emotionally logical all the time, so it's rooted in eternal human behavior, rather than "made-up." So when something funny happens, it's usually a character and plot point meeting that makes you laugh so much. Satire is mimicking human behavior, and extending it to a ludicrous degree. You can satirize behavior or style, and I do both in **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN**. But always with love. There is never malice or hatred in my films, there's always sweetness and love, even when it looks bad.

CFQ



LETTERS

It is no mere coincidence that Blatty and Friedkin should have turned out *THE EXORCIST* in 1973, although it is unlikely that they themselves would see any significance in the fact. Yet the film's inscription at this precise moment of history under certain political circumstances—i.e. America in 1973—is ideologically of considerable interest.

By 1973 those Americans capable of thinking for themselves were aware that Nixon was a criminal of unprecedented magnitude, not only because of Watergate, but because of his clear and unambiguous war crimes in Southeast Asia. The American ruling class and its assorted allies needed therefore to draw people's attention elsewhere. Thus they did through the person of Kissinger, another mass murderer, but, unlike Nixon, a superficially sympathetic man, whose charm and smile were not so patently a mere veneer. Having been part of a political machine that helped to create the crisis in the Middle East by encouraging Zionist imperialism for gain—that of American capitalism—Kissinger was now passed-off as the savior, the man who achieved the impossible, and this despite the fact, clear to anyone who bothered to look at the situation, that the fighting was continuing unabated. People have never had the chance to analyze the reality of Vietnam or Palestine through lack, not only of information—the prerogative of the ruling class which controls the media—but also of a precise historical context. Both wars of liberation have been abstracted from their true political sphere for reasons that are nothing if not ideological.

And what, one may ask, has this to do with a movie called *THE EXORCIST*? Simply this: that to see good and evil in terms of a struggle between two invisible entities that cannot be proven to exist—God and Satan—yet which are claimed always to exist throughout eternity is to mask the true evil in the world and how it is produced and to refuse any historical dimension to that world.

Men no longer believe in God, but at times of crisis they start to become afraid. And who can blame them, given the fact that they are told nothing by those who rule them and who, having created the problems in the first place—unemployment and inflation, war and the Bomb—now exploit these evils and people's fear of them by presenting them as the effects of their victims' actions, not as the causes of their victims' plight. In a world that has become increasingly incomprehensible to the man in the street, we all want security and, if someone is unable to unmask the functioning of the dominant ideology, he will fall further victim to it by accepting the ever more sinister authoritarian constraints put upon him in the hope that the next step taken to solve the problem will succeed. (The final step, of course, in the capitalist scheme of things is fascism.)

It is not surprising that people turn to eccentric religious sects to be "saved" or to preachers like Billy Graham, a willing tool in the hands of an ideology he supports to the bitter end. In other words, people, unable to know what is going on, make of the unknown the center of their lives. Or, in a given concrete situation, they fall for a spectacle called *THE EXORCIST*.

This unspeakably bad film, as boring as it is badly made and put together, is definitely a sociological phenomenon, given the reception accorded it in the States. It is, as we have been told ad nauseam, about good and evil. And what, in the film, constitutes evil? A girl of twelve using a limited vocabulary of obscene expletives. This may symbolize evil to maiden aunts and repressed members of the John Birch Society, but to any half-intelligent person it must be seen as a non-starter, except as an example of mystification.

Blatty and Friedkin are too stupid, so caught up in the crass ideological presuppositions of their class and society that they even have to stoop to the most pathetic cliché of all: making Regan take on a hideous face to "show" that she is possessed by evil. One would have thought it would have been more shocking to witness the spectacle

of a pretty girl mouthing obscenities, but Blatty and Friedkin couldn't think things out even that far.

One final point about the film's ideology (I refuse to discuss it from any other point of view as the film is without a single redeeming feature). At the beginning, when von Sydow is discussing evil, a clock stops. The implications are obvious: evil is outside of time, it is eternal, something man will always have to contend with. In other words, evil is not produced by men perpetrating acts of cruelty or oppression at a precise moment of history for a precise political reason. It exists without man, a splendidly vague abstract notion trundled forth to mystify the victims of capitalism and make them believe that they are responsible for the problems confronting them. Survivors of B-52 bombing raids would, one suspects, have a ready answer to that. Meanwhile, the best reaction to *THE EXORCIST* is perhaps that of the British audience I saw the film with: laughter.

REYNOLD HUMPHRIES
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Re your review of *IMAGES* (Vol 3 No 1) I agree it is a good film but don't know quite what you mean by "very little can be deciphered plot-wise." The linear or surface plot, which I suppose represents what Catherine thinks happens, is sufficiently clear, except that, as someone remarks in *DON'T LOOK NOW*, "Nothing is what it seems."

The child, Susannah (Catherine's "real" name) seems to be Catherine herself as a child, which would mean that every scene in which she appears is hallucinatory. Since both lovers are rather crude macho types, in contrast to Hugh, they may both be merely Catherine's sexual fantasies. When Catherine arrives at the hill above the cottage, she looks down and sees the other Catherine driving up to the door. The camera then cuts to Catherine at the door of the cottage, looking up at the watcher on the hill. Perhaps the entire film from this point is hallucination and Catherine is "really" still standing on the hill.

When Fellini's *JULIET OF THE SPIRITS* came out, a few friends and I had a jolly time sitting around playing Hunt The Symbol, one of the few benefits of a liberal education. *IMAGES* is another movie which lends itself to the pastime. Why is the cottage in the jigsaw puzzle the same as the real cottage? I understand the significance of the Unicorn, but what about the Tiger? (Incidentally, in *Search of Unicorns* sounds like a pretty good book. I must get a copy. No author ever had quite such unusual publicity!) If you want to practice unravelling enigmatic plots, read E. R. Edisson's *Mistress of Mistresses* a couple of times. After that, anything seems simple.

S. WISE
#2-1544 Barclay St, Vancouver, Canada

Charles Derry is to be lauded for "The Horror Of Personality" (Vol 3 No 3), which extends the boundaries of horror to include such disturbing efforts as *PRETTY POISON*. But in looking for the film that triggered this sub-genre he restricted his vision. *LES DIABOLIQUES* may indeed be the first modern horror film to deal with aberrant personality and neurosis, but the film that had probably the greatest influence on American productions is Raoul Walsh's *WHITE HEAT*, which pre-dates Clouzot's film by six years. As in the Al-drich films, we have an aging star (Cagney) who accepts a bizarre role. Cagney had been known for gangster portrayals for many years, but his violent, Oedipal Cody Jarrett is hardly

WHAT KIND OF MAN READS CINEFANTASTIQUE?



Seen in the May 1974 issue of *GQ* (Gentleman's Quarterly).

less startling than the sight of one-time ingenue Bette Davis slobbering about. Walsh and screenwriters Ivan Goff and Ben Roberts shoved us into the real world with this film, making us watch Cagney, a classic role model if ever there was one, twist and writhe into something alarmingly different. The brash, happy-go-lucky Cagney hoodlum is revealed as being quite clearly and quite dangerously insane. Of course, psychotics had appeared in films before, but never as so deliberately a shatterer of genre tradition. Why the breakthrough came in a crime picture is open to conjecture, but perhaps it is because the horror genre was (and to an unhappy extent, still is) a despised one, and horror producers were reluctant to risk their mass audience approval and critical ambivalence with such novel material.

Correction: That is Vera Clouzot in the top photo on page 17, not Simone Signoret, and the actor in the bottom photo is Harry Townes, not Phil Carey.

DAVID HOGAN
6400 Center St #50, Mentor OH 44060

The sad thing about *THE EXORCIST* is that Friedkin's film is going to have a great deal of influence on future horror films (as Kubrick's far more worthy 2001 did on science fiction films) and the way people view them. Witness your review of *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*: the suggestion, as opposed to graphic depiction, of such scenes as Florence Tanner's seduction by the invisible Daniel Belasco was not enough for your reviewer, he wanted to see rotting corpses. From now on, only films which can outdo the grossness of *THE EXORCIST* are going to be taken seriously. It's a pity, if *THE EXORCIST* is the price of respectability for the genre, I think we could have done without it.

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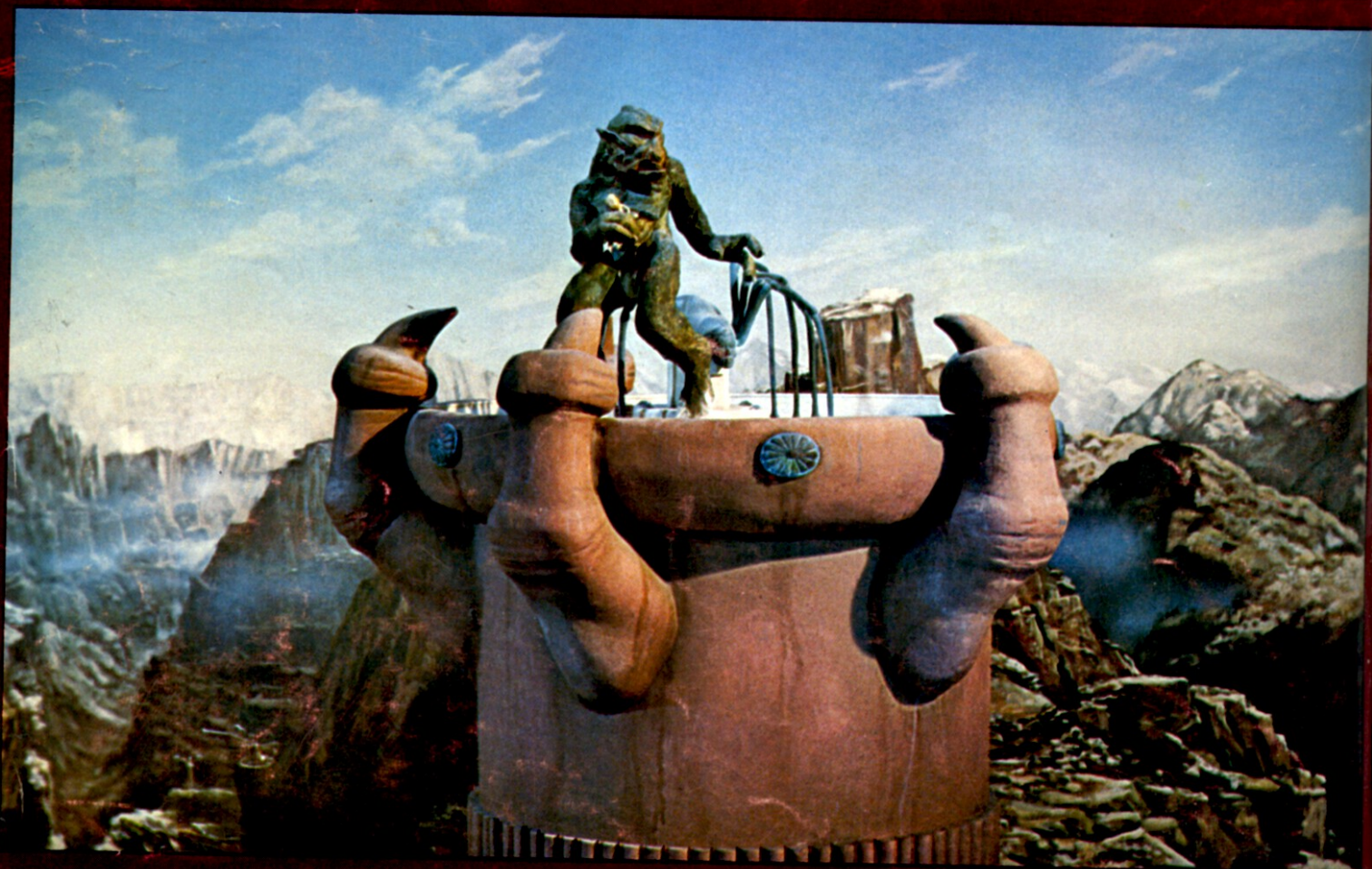
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